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The Proceedings

OF THE

METHODIST CHURCH CONGRESS,

Bristol, Eng.

HELD IN

THE CENTRAL HALL, BRISTOL

October 7—10, 1929

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FOREWORD

The Bristol Methodist Church Congress was born of two convictions. First, that God is leading the present divided Methodist Communions into a closer fellowship and service in order that they may more effectually fulfil their original vocation. Second, that, in order to equip ourselves for this 'high calling of God,' it is imperative that we come together to consider our responsibilities in the present world situation—our message and our resources in God—in the atmosphere of religious retreat, where clear thinking and true devotion may be exercised side by side. It is this which distinguishes the Bristol 'Congress' from a 'Conference,' where administrative and legislative concerns preoccupy us. We desired, first, an opportunity for the calm consideration of critical and constructive movements in ethical and religious thought, which profoundly affect the interpretation of the Christian Evangel and our Methodist Emphasis upon its presentation to the men of our generation: and, most of all, to see the present world situation in its extremist need and direst peril, and to find again God's word for us in this day and generation.

Representatives of the three Methodist Communions in Bristol, South Wales, and the West of England, were called into consultation, and a year was spent in thorough and prayerful preparation. The Congress itself, throughout four days of memorable experiences, assembled in Bristol. The delegates, drawn from an area bounded by Portsmouth, Penzance, Pembroke, Gloucester and Oxford, numbered nearly a thousand; and the aggregate attendances of delegates and visitors

at the ten sessions, including three crowded evening meetings, is estimated at twelve thousand. In addition, the influence of the Congress was spread further afield by services conducted by selected preachers in some of the city pulpits, and by evening meetings held in neighbouring towns.

In our preparations, we had recognized from the first the necessity of facing the obligations of our time in harmony with our Methodist history and tradition, and in accordance with our specific contribution to the spread of the gospel. We were not unmindful, therefore, that Methodism arose in the eighteenth century with the conscious vocation 'to spread Scriptural Holiness throughout the land.' But we felt it still more imperative to insist that its present pressing responsibility is not only to possess again in their fullness the spiritual forces which gave birth to the Evangelical Revival, but also to interpret afresh, in the living speech of to-day, their vital significance and divine compulsion, and to apply them under the changed conditions of the modern world.

The subjects chosen for the Congress, therefore, had a direct relation to living issues of the day and hour. Thus, in regard to the much debated question of the Christian Ministry, which is one of the thorny difficulties to be encountered on the way to Christian Re-union, we desired to affirm our continued adherence to the Protestant and Prophetic conception of the Ministry, and to exalt that 'call of God to preach,' which is bound up with the great New Testament truth of the universal priesthood of believers, and may be given to laymen and to women, as to a ministry officially set apart. Again, the revival of Catholic teaching concerning the Sacraments in our day gives a new importance to some phases of early Methodist practice under John Wesley's direct guidance, by which we are enabled, without the

slightest approach to a sacerdotal conception of sacramental values, to affirm the evangelical effectiveness of perpetually proclaiming 'the Lord's death till He come.' In like manner, our usage in regard to Baptism supplied a deeper motive for the acceptance of our corporate responsibility in regard to the training of childhood within our borders, in line with the newer recognition of the importance of pre-natal and early post-natal influences upon the formation of character. An extension of the latter considerations, through the fresh discernment of our time into the problems of adolescence, shaped our presentation of Christ's Call to Youth. In the same way, our consideration of essential elements in our Methodist Witness, like 'The Appeal to Experience' and 'Christian Perfection,' was conditioned by the investigations of our day in the regions of religious psychology and in the clamant demand for a lofty idealism in the realms of individual character and social practice. Yet all this was meant but to prepare us for a vision of world need and a deep sense of utter dependence on God, in whom alone we could be adequate for our task. Our minds were riveted by the spectacle of a world on which rested the slowly deepening shadow of a secular civilization with which the Jerusalem Conference of Easter, 1928, had confronted the whole resources of Christendom, and we could but pray that the Spirit of God might bring that grim peril home to us, that we might arise in the power of God to face it. It is in the discussion of Methodism and World Evangelization, therefore, with 'the peril of secular civilization' before our eyes, that the gravamen of concern in the Congress will be seen.

A distinctive feature of the Congress was the preparation for its prayer life. With even greater concern than that with which the choice of Congress subjects was approached, a separate devotional service was

prepared for each session. For not a few, the outstanding impression carried away will be the use made of the litanies of devotion brought together in *Hymns and Devotions*. From the first, the Congress was conceived in prayer, and it was recognized that our aim would not be achieved unless we prayed together as earnestly and intelligently as we thought together. Equally was the concern clear from the first that we should explore some of the fresh and opulent possibilities of corporate prayer and silence which many have discovered in our day, and so enrich, under God's grace, our own more characteristic and spontaneous devotions. For this purpose, the hymns of the Wesleys, breathing the spirit of prayer as truly as that of praise and thanksgiving, proved a treasury of surpassing wealth, and the use that could be made of them was an inspiring revelation to many. Our indebtedness to other sources of devotion is at the same time willingly and gratefully acknowledged. The incorporation of these services from *Hymns and Devotions* in the present volume will help readers to see the place they occupied in each session, and may serve to recall for members of the Congress the sure experience of the manifest presence of God in which the addresses, which blended with the silence and the prayers, were heard and pondered.

The present volume is offered to a wider public in the belief that the effort of the Congress to bring out the value and significance for the life of to-day of the Methodist Witness to 'a free, full, present salvation,' deserves a permanent record. For the individual reader, we venture to suggest that the book should be read with the endeavour to relate the addresses with the accompanying devotional exercises as they are presented in the proceedure for each session. It is for this purpose that the devotional services have been combined with the respective addresses. For the same

reason it is also hoped that the book may provide a welcome and inspiring textbook and devotional guide for Guilds and Study Circles, and a stimulus to the spiritual vitality of Class Meetings, Brotherhoods and Bible Classes. It may thus come to pass that the divinely-ordered kinship of corporate thought and prayer, which, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, created and enshrined the joys and solemnities that together made the Congress memorable to those who were present, may be used by the self-same Spirit to quicken and strengthen the fellowship in prayer so characteristic of early Methodism, and so essential for its future.

T. Ferrier Hulme, *Chairman of Executive.*
Frederic Platt, E. C. Urwin, Arthur Jubb } *Programme Secretaries.*
J. A. Broadbelt, H. S. Southall } *General Secretaries.*

OPENING SESSION

Memorial Service for the late
Professor A. S. Peake, and
The Rev. J. H. Saxton
President of the Primitive Methodist Conference

Sacramental Service conducted by
T. Ferrier Hulme, M.A., LL.D.
Wesleyan Methodist Church

Communion Address
J. T. Barkby
Primitive Methodist Church

The Congress assembled under the shadow of a great sorrow.

Amongst the first to recognize the possibilities of the Congress, and to promise their personal help, were the Rev. J. H. Saxton, President of the Primitive Methodist Conference, and Professor Arthur S. Peake, M.A., D.D., the distinguished Biblical Scholar, of the same Church. Dr. Peake had undertaken to read the first Paper at the Congress, on 'The Prophetic Ministry.' Mr. Saxton had promised to preside at the morning and afternoon sessions on Thursday, October 10, and to give an address on 'Methodism and the World' at the evening session on Wednesday, October 9.

Before the Congress opened, God had called these revered and devoted men to their rest and their reward.

The first act of the Congress was to take part in a brief Memorial Service, and reverently to give God thanks for these two honoured and beloved servants of the Church and Kingdom of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

SACRAMENTAL SERVICE

In Memoriam

ARTHUR SAMUEL PEAKE

JAMES HUTCHINSON SAXTON

LET US SING :

Holy, holy, holy ! all the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea !
Cherubim and Seraphim falling down before Thee,
Who wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

SCRIPTURES :

John xi., 25, 26. 1 Tim. vi., 7. Job i., 21.

LET US PRAY :

By Thine agony and bloody sweat ; by Thy Cross and Passion ; by Thy precious Death and Burial ; by Thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension ; and by the coming of the Holy Ghost,

Good Lord, deliver us.

In all time of our tribulation ; in all time of our wealth ; in the hour of death and in the day of judgement,

Good Lord, deliver us.

O Lamb of God that takest away the sin of the world ;

Grant us Thy Peace.

O Lamb of God that takest away the sin of the world ;

Have mercy upon us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

LET US SING :

Saviour of all, to Thee we bow,
And own Thee faithful to Thy word ;
We hear Thy voice, and open now
Our hearts to entertain our Lord.

Come in, come in, Thou heavenly Guest,
  Delight in what Thyself hast given ;
On Thy own gifts and graces feast,
  And make the contrite heart Thy heaven.

Smell the sweet odour of our prayers,
  Our sacrifice of praise approve,
And treasure up our gracious tears,
  And rest in Thy redeeming love.

Beneath Thy shadow let us sit,
  Call us Thy friends, and love, and bride,
And bid us freely drink and eat
  Thy dainties, and be satisfied.

O let us on Thy fullness feed,
  And eat Thy flesh, and drink Thy blood !
Jesus, Thy blood is drink indeed ;
  Jesus, Thy flesh is angels' food.

The heavenly manna faith imparts,
  Faith makes Thy fullness all our own ;
We feed upon Thee in our hearts,
  And find that heaven and Thou are one.

PRE-COMMUNION SERVICE.

COMMUNION ADDRESS

THIRTY-FIVE years ago I made my first visit to the city of Athens. We were a large party, for the most part of professedly Christian people, connected with most of the great sections of the Protestant Church, and a few of no particular Church persuasion. On the Sunday afternoon some of us met on Mars Hill. We read the sermon Paul preached on that historic height, talked about it, and about the Apostle and the gospel he preached, from our own different points of view, and prayed. Then, just as we were coming away, someone struck up Dr. Watts's great hymn,

> When I survey the wondrous cross
> On which the Prince of Glory died,
> My richest gain I count but loss,
> And pour contempt on all my pride.

In the singing of that hymn we all joined, and joined as one, our ecclesiastical distinctions notwithstanding, and our hearts were strangely warmed as we did so.

Whoever started that hymn was moved by a true instinct, since it is concerned with great truths that are common to and unite all Christians—Christ and Him crucified. Not that we all think of our Lord's Person and Work in the same way, but that we are all one in devotion to our crucified Lord.

At the beginning of this Congress, a Congress which seeks to prepare us for a Union which shall make us one, it is surely fitting that we should gather about the Table our Lord Himself has set, which reminds us of Him and the redeeming love which unites His disciples. This table has often been a living centre of unity for

our Lord's scattered disciples. 'In upper rooms and catacombs, in desert places and moorlands, in churches and cathedrals, in rude huts in savage and heathen lands—men and women of the most varied types and conditions, educated and ignorant, simple and gentle, rich and poor, peer and peasant, priest and people, a multitude no man can number, have met together to celebrate this Supper,' and have not only been made wiser, happier, and holier, but have gained a new or better sense of their oneness in the oneness of their devotion to their crucified Lord. Would that in this great hour of our Churches' history this Table of the Lord might work in us this miracle of grace!

I. A Memorial

This Supper is our Lord's Memorial of Himself

A very simple and human thing was our Lord's appointment of this Sacrament. His days with His disciples were numbered. A few hours hence and He would be in the hands of those who would nail Him to the cross. And when He was gone He did not wish to be forgotten. When a friend is setting out on a long absence, or is passing for ever from the earth, he puts into the hands of those he loves a portrait or something he has used, or worn, or prized, and is pleased to think it will be treasured for his sake, and when it is used or seen he will be remembered.

God not less than man wishes to be remembered. One of the most poignant cries in this Book is when God says, 'My people have forgotten Me.' Our Lord shared this longing to be remembered, and, as He had no portrait of Himself, no ring, no cloak, no houses, no lands, nor anything of material worth He could give to His disciples that they might keep in memory of Him, He lifted the material of the supper before

Him, and bade them make the simple act of eating and drinking the occasion of remembering Him. 'This do in remembrance of *Me*.'

As we to-night eat this bread and drink this wine, we do it in remembrance of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is well for us to do so ; well, not only because at the beginning of His great agony our Lord requested His disciples to do so, but because of what He is to us. Our religion is not a theory ; it is not a speculation, a system of philosophy putting us into possession of a true scheme of things and guiding us to a sound code of morals ; it is, above all, a personal matter. It is devotion to Jesus Christ, fellowship with Jesus Christ. He is the Lord of our life and the God of our salvation. With Charles Wesley we sing :

> Jesus, my all in all Thou art ;
> My rest in toil, my ease in pain,
> The medicine of my broken heart,
> In war my peace, in loss my gain,
> My smile beneath the tyrant's frown,
> In shame my glory and my crown.

This is what Jesus is to us. And so we love Him, love to think of Him, to speak of Him, to serve Him, to renew our fellowship with Him. Hence,

> In memory of our Saviour's love
> We keep the sacred feast.

Our Lord's Memorial of His Great Sacrifice

But while we by this Supper remember our Lord we are especially mindful of His great sacrifice. We 'show forth the Lord's death until He come.' The sacrifice of our Lord did not begin at Calvary. Bethlehem, when He emptied Himself of His glory and became a man, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, was a sacrifice. Living in a peasant's cottage and working like a peasant for his daily bread was a

sacrifice. To be hungry and thirsty and weary and have not where to lay His head was a sacrifice. To be misunderstood and misrepresented, to come unto His own and His own receive Him not, was a sacrifice. But Calvary was the climax, the culmination and all-completing act of His self-sacrificing life, and without which all else would have been in vain. And what a sacrifice !

> We may not know, we cannot tell
> What pains He had to bear ;
> But we believe it was for us
> He hung and suffered there.

The centre and circumference of our religion are to us to-day, and ever will be, what they were to Paul, to Christians through the ages, and to the illustrious souls who under God founded our Churches—Jesus and Him Crucified. And so as we sit down to this Table we paint again in fresh and vivid colours the image of Him who suffered unto death, and by whose suffering we and men everywhere have salvation.

II. A Communion

But this Supper is something more. We remember here our dying and ever-living Lord, and we also commune with Him. These symbols were appointed for our remembrance of Christ, that by remembering Him we might renew our fellowship with Him.

Religion is something more than a memory : it is a present, a perpetual experience ; fellowship with our Divine Lord and Master, so that we live in Him and He in us. Mystical ? So it is, as are all great things. But not more mystical than the child living in the parent and the parent living in the child. But, however mystical, it is, thank God, none the less an actual fact of life and experience. Some, like John Wesley,

can remember the time and place where the burden of their heart rolled away and that fellowship began. To others, their first vital acquaintance with Christ is less vivid, but it is none the less a living, bright reality.

> But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
> A present help is He;
> And faith has still its Olivet,
> And love its Galilee.

And when we sit down to this Table of our Lord these symbols, the bread we eat and the wine we drink, so remind us of Him that in eating and drinking we nourish our souls with Him who is our life.

III. A Sacrament

Finally, this Supper is also a Sacrament, a vow, a pledge of devotion to Him who is our Lord and Master. In the Order of Communion in the Church of England, in the prayer following the actual partaking, this consecration is offered, 'And here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls, and bodies to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto Thee.' Partaking of this Supper, we pledge or consecrate ourselves anew unto Jesus Christ.

That great teacher to whom we owe so much, Robertson Smith, preaching from the text, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' began by saying, 'He who said that is with us now.' He who established this feast is with us now. It is His piercèd hands that will break for us this bread and give to us this wine, that we may renew our vision of Him, our fellowship with Him, and our consecration to Him. So Lord let it be!

> O Lord and Master of us all,
> Whate'er our name or sign,
> We own Thy sway, we hear Thy call,
> We test our lives by thine.

J. T. Barkby.

LET US SING :

Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face ;
Here would I touch and handle things unseen,
Here grasp with firmer hand the eternal grace,
And all my weariness upon Thee lean.

Here would I feed upon the bread of God,
Here drink with Thee the royal wine of heaven ;
Here would I lay aside each earthly load,
Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

This is the hour of banquet and of song ;
This is the heavenly table spread for me ;
Here let me feast, and, feasting, still prolong
The brief, bright hour of fellowship with Thee.

THE ADMINISTRATION.

Too soon we rise ; the symbols disappear ;
The feast, though not the love, is past and gone ;
The bread and wine remove, but Thou art here,
Nearer than ever, still my shield and sun.

I have no help but Thine ; nor do I need
Another arm save Thine to lean upon ;
It is enough, my Lord, enough indeed ;
My strength is in Thy might, Thy might alone.

Feast after feast thus comes and passes by,
Yet, passing, points to the glad feast above,
Giving sweet foretaste of the festal joy,
The Lamb's great bridal feast of bliss and love.

POST-COMMUNION SERVICE.

LET US SING :

Give me the wings of faith to rise
Within the veil, and see
The saints above, how great their joys,
How bright their glories be.

Once they were mourners here below,
And poured out cries and tears ;
They wrestled hard, as we do now,
With sins, and doubts, and fears.

I ask them whence their victory came ;
They, with united breath,
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to His death.

They marked the footsteps that He trod,
His zeal inspired their breast ;
And following their incarnate God,
Possess the promised rest.

Our glorious Leader claims our praise
For His own pattern given ;
While the long cloud of witnesses
Show the same path to heaven.

BENEDICTION.

I

THE PROPHETIC MINISTRY

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Wesleyan Methodist Church

Methodism has always regarded the call to preach the gospel of 'a free, full, present salvation' as its primary responsibility. In some branches of the Christian Church, the office of the Preacher is considered inferior in spiritual authority to that of the Priest. We desire to assert once more, as was convincingly done at the Reformation, the supreme value set upon the Prophetic Ministry in the New Testament and in the Apostolic Church. The primary qualification of a true Ministry of the Word and Sacraments is the reception, possession, and exercise of spiritual gifts, bestowed by the Holy Spirit 'dividing to every man severally as He will.' In line with this, Methodists have consistently stressed 'gifts, grace, and fruit,' as the first qualification of the preacher of the gospel and the ultimate test of the validity of his orders.

We remind ourselves that such gifts have not been limited to a ministry officially set apart, but have been abundantly bestowed upon laymen and upon women, who have shown themselves approved unto God, and chosen vessels for the ministries of His Grace to their fellows. Indeed, the complete conception of a Prophetic Ministry positively lays the burden of responsibility of seeking the lost upon all who see in vision the shepherdless sheep of Christ's flock. Sacerdotal claims cannot challenge the glorious privilege accorded to all those who know His salvation of becoming His witnesses, or release them from the abiding responsibility of preaching Him to their fellows. We need to re-assert and exercise with joyous freedom the great New Testament truth of the universal priesthood of believers. In its light, we need also to explore afresh the function assigned to the Methodist ministry, the office of the Local Preacher and the new call of the age for the ministry of devoted women.

HYMN :

Come, ye that love the Lord,
And let your joys be known ;
Join in a song with sweet accord,
While ye surround His throne
Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God ;
But servants of the heavenly King
May speak their joys abroad.

The God that rules on high,
That all the earth surveys,
That rides upon the stormy sky,
And calms the roaring seas,—
This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our love :
He will send down His heavenly powers,
To carry us above.

The men of grace have found
Glory begun below ;
Celestial fruit on earthly ground
From faith and hope may grow :
Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dry ;
We are marching through Immanuel's ground,
To fairer worlds on high.

THE READING OF THE SCRIPTURE :

The Shepherd of the Lost	–	–	Luke xv. 4–7
'While we were yet sinners'	–	–	Rom. v. 1–11
'Diversities of Gifts'	–	–	1 Cor. xii. 4–11

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER.

TE DEUM LAUDAMUS :

We praise Thee, O God : we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.
All the earth doth worship Thee : the Father everlasting.
To Thee all Angels cry aloud : the Heavens, and all the Powers therein.
To Thee Cherubin, and Seraphin : continually do cry,
Holy, Holy, Holy : Lord God of Sabaoth ;
Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty : of Thy Glory.

The glorious company of the Apostles : praise Thee.
The goodly fellowship of the Prophets : praise Thee.
The noble army of Martyrs : praise Thee.
The holy Church throughout all the world : doth acknowledge Thee ;
The Father : of an infinite Majesty ;
Thine honourable, true : and only Son ;
Also the Holy Ghost : the Comforter.
Thou art the King of Glory : O Christ.
Thou art the everlasting Son : of the Father.
When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver man : Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.
When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death : Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.
Thou sittest at the right hand of God : in the Glory of the Father.
We believe that Thou shalt come : to be our Judge.
We therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants : whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.
Make them to be numbered with Thy Saints : in glory everlasting.
O Lord, save Thy people : and bless Thine heritage.
Govern them : and lift them up for ever.
Day by day : we magnify Thee ;
And we worship Thy Name : ever world without end.
Vouchsafe, O Lord : to keep us this day without sin.
O Lord, have mercy upon us : have mercy upon us.
O Lord, let Thy mercy lighten upon us : as our trust is in Thee.
O Lord, in Thee have I trusted : let me never be confounded.

I

THE MINISTRY IN THE EARLY CHURCH

It is a characteristic of our common Methodism that we have always set great store by preaching. 'The Stations of the Preachers' is how, as regards my own Church, the ministerial appointments made at the Conference used to be described in the yearly Minutes. We Methodists still emphasize the preaching gift. The term 'priest' has never become acclimatized among us. We have an altar, or, rather, we have in the Communion Service, which our people are coming increasingly to love, that which reminds us of an altar, but we do not think it fitting to call him who presides at that service a 'priest.' The Lord's Supper is not a sacrifice, but a proclamation of the one perfect sacrifice offered once for all on the cross. Its observance, among other meanings, is as St. Paul tells us, a form of preaching[1]—preaching by act in contradistinction to preaching by word. So we magnify the prophetic aspect of the ministry. How far, in so doing, are we true to the conceptions of the New Testament and the Early Church, and how far are those who fulfil their ministry amongst us true to the apostolic and primitive type?—these are the questions we have briefly to consider.

And, first of all, what about the origin of our faith? Who, or what, created the Christian Church? Our religion took its rise from Christ, even as it still finds in Him its divine message and its spiritual dynamic. Now when Christ began His wonderful ministry, there

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 26.

were two things He proceeded to do—to preach and to heal. He had a message to deliver, one so gracious that it could be described as 'good news.' He proclaimed a new view of God, a new way of life, a social order imbued with a new spirit. Even the miracles, that second phase of the ministry, were not an addendum to the message, but, as Dr. Cairns has shown in his recent book,[1] an integral part of it. Christ was above everything else a preacher. And what He was Himself He commanded His disciples to be. 'As ye go, preach,' said He. 'Preach the gospel to every creature.' It is true that the total message which Jesus had for the world lay not simply in His words, but in what He was and did, and notably, as regards His deeds, in the atoning death which He suffered on the cross. It was that message which created the Church, that fellowship of godly souls linked to each other, even before Pentecost, by a common faith and devotion which Christ had inspired, but bound even more closely together when the Holy Spirit had set all their hearts aglow and equipped them for the work they had to do.

And that work, like that of their Master, was primarily preaching. Peter the fisherman at once became Peter the prophet, and three thousand, moved by his message, were added to the Christian fellowship. And as the Church began, so it grew. The apostles became missionaries and evangelists. 'They went out and preached everywhere,' says the unknown writer who supplied the concluding section of St. Mark's Gospel. As the movement grew, other duties thrust themselves upon the apostles, at Jerusalem, e.g., the administration of the poor fund. But they were jealous of anything which curtailed their opportunities to preach. 'It is not fitting,' said they, in calling for the appointment of 'The Seven,' 'that we

[1] *The Faith that Rebels.*

should forsake the word of God, and serve tables.' Even St. Paul, when at Corinth, delegated baptism to other hands. 'Christ sent me,' said he, 'not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.' To him it was the gospel that was the saving message; it was 'the power of God unto salvation' to him who believed it, and so he and the other apostles were eager to proclaim it. And if, during the first forty years after our Lord's ascension, the Christian faith had overflowed into all the main cities round the Mediterranean as far west as Rome, that marvellous advance was due to men with Christ's message on their lips and the experience of His saving grace in their hearts. It was the product of preachers and preaching.

So we have New Testament authority for our emphasis on preaching. But, next, what about the men whom Methodism calls to that work? Have we who serve Methodism in the ministry of the word the same right so to do as those who fulfilled the prophetic function in the Early Church? Is ours a valid ministry? Are we in the true apostolical succession? The answer to these questions demands some examination of the Christian literature of the first two centuries. We begin with the New Testament. There the Risen Christ is spoken of as having given to His Church various types of ministry. 'He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.'[1] The presence, again, of the Spirit in the Church is regarded as accounting for certain 'gifts' or charismata. 'God hath set some in the Church,' says St. Paul, 'first apostles, secondly prophets, then teachers,'[2] and, further on in the list, mention is made of 'helps, governments.' How are we to interpret these various types of ministry, and how far are they reproduced, and reproduced validly, among us? For answer we begin with the apostles.

[1] Eph. iv. 11. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 28.

Now, the term 'apostle' has in the New Testament a narrow and a wider sense. In its narrow usage it describes simply the Twelve. With them the requisite qualification for the apostolate was that they had known Jesus and could bear witness to His resurrection.[1] Through their personal intimacy with Christ they were able to speak of Him with an authority others could not claim. This set them apart and gave them a unique position and influence in the Church. It is true that St. Paul claimed to be added to the number on the ground that he too had seen the Lord and could testify that He was risen, and his claim was allowed. But the term 'apostle' became used also in a wider sense. It was applied to any one who, at the instigation or by the approval of a local church, went forth on an evangelistic mission. So Barnabas is styled an 'apostle.'[2] Andronicus and Junias, Paul's kinsmen, but otherwise unknown, are mentioned as 'of note among the apostles.'[3] But this wider denotation of the term can easily be explained. It was due to the kind of work which an 'apostle' set himself to do. The Twelve were not ministers of local churches. They held an independent position. Their mission, in the main, was to go out into unevangelized areas, to carry their message to new populations, and to establish among them a Christian Church. Theirs was largely pioneer work. Because of this, men who, following in their train, did the same work were given the same name. These successors and imitators were also *apostoloi*, men sent forth on a mission. As to where they got their commission, if the action of the Church at Antioch in sending forth Paul and Barnabas is at all typical, as it probably was, it was some local church, aflame with missionary zeal, that discerned in its fellowship men fitted to carry the gospel to new districts, and sent them forth to undertake it. So the

[1] Acts i. 21, 22. [2] Acts. xvi 14. [3] Rom. xvi. 7.

'apostles' were evangelistic pioneers. In that sense Methodism has had its apostles; it has them still. The greatest was John Wesley himself; but at home and on the mission field he has had numberless successors. I simply add, ere I leave this point, that, as regards the term 'evangelist'—which occurs only three times in the New Testament, and is entirely absent from post-apostolic literature—Lindsay is probably right in claiming that it was merely a synonym for 'apostle' in the wider sense of the word.

We come, next, to a most interesting type of ministry in the Early Church, viz. that of the 'prophets.' Who were they, and what was their function? They, unlike the 'itinerants' to whom I have referred, were, in the first instance, preachers in local churches to which they belonged. 'Preacher,' rather than the more general term 'minister,' is the right word by which to describe them. One is almost tempted to diverge at this point in order to say something as to the organization of the local churches in New Testament days. I will content myself by saying that the idea that the Church had from the first a stereotyped and uniform kind of organization—due, as some theorists would have us believe, to Christ Himself—has no foundation in fact. No type of ecclesiastical organization can claim the authority of Christ. Organization took shape when there was something to be organized. Moreover, its form was dictated in some measure by organization in other realms, political and religious, of which the members of a church had had experience in their pre-Christian days, the result being, as Canon Streeter has shown in his recent book,[1] that there was some variety in the organization of the Early Church. All that, however, is by the way. To understand what the 'prophets' were, we cannot do better than observe, under St. Paul's guidance, the church in Corinth at

[1] *The Primitive Church.*

worship. That church was singularly rich in what are called 'spiritual gifts,' i.e. aptitudes which were quickened into exercise by the Spirit of God. Public worship there must often have been a very emotional, and, to strangers who were present, an extremely perplexing, thing. Some meetings in the Methodism of the past could easily have supplied a parallel. No doubt at Corinth a certain order in worship was observed up to a point. There would be prayers or benedictions, hymns, a Scripture lesson, followed by some edificatory comments or an exposition, and though some one would be in formal charge of the service up to this point, we have no evidence that it was always the same person, some one holding the office of minister. As a matter of fact, the hymns were provided, or suggested in part, by the congregation,[1] and the exposition would probably be undertaken by some member who was recognized as having the 'gift' of 'wisdom' or 'knowledge,' i.e. interpretative insight. After these routine exercises the meeting was thrown open, and then came the opportunity of those who had the 'gifts' of 'prophecy' and 'speaking with tongues.' 'Prophecy' in that context was simply what we should call 'inspired preaching.' It was a moving, but intelligent, presentation of Christian truth, the utterance of a glowing heart and an inspired tongue. Of 'tongues,' which St. Paul relegated to their proper position of inferiority, I need not speak. The 'prophets' (with the 'apostles') represented the most valuable element in the worship and witness of the Early Church. There is no suggestion that they had as yet an official status, nor did they supply all that a church needed. There were sundry little duties requiring to be discharged, and there was the important task of dealing wisely with the business of a church. Hence St. Paul includes 'helpers' and 'administrators'

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

among the types of service provided by God. Also it would probably often happen that a man would be recognized as having more than one 'gift,' so that a 'prophet' who by reason of his endowment was eagerly listened to in worship, would also be conceded a commanding influence in the business session of the church. That seems as near as we get at this point to the ministry as we understand it.

So much for the New Testament 'prophet' as we first know him. He is not an official, but a church member, gifted in preaching and in other ways, who puts his aptitudes at the service of the local church to which he belongs. Subsequently there came two interesting developments. First of all, the 'prophet,' like the 'apostle,' took to the road. He became a 'travelling' preacher. He went out to evangelize new areas, incidentally calling on the way at churches already established, and probably rendering them some service. That stage was reached in New Testament times. In St. John's third Epistle mention is made of some brethren who had gone forth to mission a heathen district. They had John's approval and authority, but just for that reason, when they called at the church of which Gaius was a member, Diotrephes, an influential but mischievous member of the church, prompted by his dislike of John, refused to give hospitality to these journeying missionaries, and forbade others to do so. It was Gaius who opened his house to them, and in due course set them on their way. That picture is developed in the interesting document known as *The Didache* or *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*—a document which belongs to the first quarter of the second century. There detailed instructions are given as to how churches were to act when some of these itinerant 'prophets' descended upon them. Here is what is said[1]:

[1] *Didache*, xi. 3.

Now concerning the Apostles and Prophets, according to the decree of the gospel so do ye.

Let every Apostle that cometh to you be received as the Lord ;

But he shall not stay save for one day ; but if there be necessity, the next day also ; but if he stay three, he is a false prophet.

And let the Apostle when he departs take nothing save bread (to last him) till he reaches his night's lodging. But if he ask for money, he is a false prophet.

The manual goes on to say that ability to ' speak in Spirit ' does not by itself prove a man to be a ' prophet.' He must also ' have the ways of the Lord,' and practise what he preaches. Moreover, if an itinerant ' prophet ' chose to settle down in some church and serve it, the *Didache* says that he is to receive for his support the firstfruit of the harvest and the herd, of a batch of bread, and of a jar of wine or oil when one was opened. What all this means is that ' prophecy ' has become to some extent a profession, and the ' prophet,' while still mainly a preacher, is on the way towards being an official supported by the Church.

In the next stage the development has become complete. Leadership, corporate and semi-official in character, had appeared even in the apostolic age. Paul and Barnabas appointed ' elders ' in the churches which they founded on their first missionary journey.[1] Doubtless the analogous organization of the Jewish synagogue suggested to the two apostles the form which their action took. The ' elders ' were a sort of committee of management. Their functions, however, whatever they were to begin with, must soon have come to embrace the religious welfare as well as the material and financial interests of the church which they served, for the ' elders ' of the church at Ephesus who came to St. Paul at Miletus were exhorted by him to ' shepherd

[1] Acts xiv. 23.

the church ' and to take heed to all the flock of which the Holy Spirit had appointed them overseers.[1] A similar situation seems to have existed at Thessalonica. There no mention is made of ' elders ' ; the term used for the leaders of the church is ' they who are over you in the Lord.'[2] The phrase so translated recalls, as was not unnatural in a Greek city like Thessalonica, a familiar relationship in Greek city life. Moreover, the full statement concerning the men whom it designates is that they ' are working among you, presiding over you in the Lord, and maintaining discipline.' There administrative and pastoral functions seem to have been combined in the same persons. It has already been suggested that a similar fusion of duties probably took place in churches where ' prophets ' were in evidence, especially when a ' prophet ' of strong personality combined with the prophetic gift an aptitude for leadership. Hence, as the second century runs its course, there comes into view a definite official class or order who constitute the council of a church, or its governing committee. The *Didache* speaks of ' bishops ' (or overseers) ' and deacons,' and the significant fact is that they were elected by the church which they served. ' Elect therefore for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men meek and not lovers of money, and true and proved ; for they too minister to you the ministry of the prophets and teachers. Therefore despise them not ; for they are your honoured ones, together with the prophets and teachers.'[3] The deacons were probably the ' helps ' or ' helpers ' mentioned by St. Paul, men who attended to certain subordinate matters. They, with the bishops, formed the church council, though to administrative duties they added those of preaching and teaching, sharing there the distinctive service of the prophets and the

[1] Acts xx. 28. [2] 1 Thess. v. 12.
[3] *Didache*, xv. 1, 2.

teachers. Later Christian literature[1] of the second century mentions three orders—viz. bishop, elders, and deacons—as constituting the officers of a church, the development thus signified being that one person among the bishops has attained pre-eminence, whilst the others, who were previously on an equal footing with him, become grouped round him as 'elders,' and are supplemented, as before, by the 'deacons.' With the emergence of one 'bishop' in a church, the evolution of an office having its parallel in our present-day ministry may be said to be complete.

What this historic survey of the first two centuries, brief as it has been, reveals to us is that the ministry, as we understand it, was a development. It was the creation of the Church itself. It sprang from within the Church. It represented the Church as a living organism becoming differentiated in function, providing for its own welfare, gradually adjusting itself to all its problems of government and worship and work, discerning the 'gifts' which had been bestowed upon its members by the Spirit and finding for them proper use and expression, always ensuring, however, that character, as well as aptitude, was among the credentials for office. In all this, Methodism stands in line with the primitive Church. Our ministry, too, springs from within our fellowship, and is created by it. In one who aspires to the ministerial office we require to be assured, first of all, that he has heard the call of God in his own soul; but the Church also, ere it throws open the gates of the ministry to him, demands, as confirmatory of the personal call, evidence that in quality of personality and in gifts of mind and utterance the would-be minister has fitness for the office to which he aspires. Where that fitness is really absent no ordination, episcopal or non-episcopal, can supply it, though, where it is present, we rightly believe that

[1] *Sources of Apostolic Canons* and *Letters of Ignatius of Antioch.*

ordination may mean a fuller baptism of the Spirit and an increased equipment for the work. So we of the Methodist ministry hold no truce with those who question the validity of our orders. We have heard in our hearts the call of God, and the Church in which we learnt to love and serve our Lord has also called and ordained us. That was enough for the Church of the first two centuries ; it is enough for us. We are in the apostolical succession, the only one which has any truth in it. Those who hold a different and, as we maintain, a mistaken theory of it may believe that there is something defective in our orders, and may suggest, as the condition of union with them, our submission to re-ordination at episcopal hands. To that some of us will never consent. To do so, however the action was safeguarded, would be to admit, at least by implication, that there was some defect in our previous title to the ministerial office, and we cannot thus betray what in our heart of hearts we know to be the truth. And surely those who raise that difficulty might be wiser and even more scientific if, instead of bringing a theory to the facts, they looked at the facts and then framed their theory. We Methodist ministers are not the first the validity of whose orders has been questioned. There, too, we are in an apostolical succession. When men in other Churches question our title to be true ministers of the Church of Christ, we point to the work which Methodism has done ; the souls, otherwise lost and perishing, to whom it has made known the message of salvation, the miracles of grace which have been wrought through it, the millions of men and women who throughout the years and in all parts of the world have been gathered by Methodism into Christian fellowship and nourished in a life of holiness and service, the children and young people who have been taught the name of Christ and have learnt to love and obey Him. Pointing to these unchallengeable triumphs of

divine grace with which the work of Methodism, and not least of its ministry, has been blessed, we say, as did St. Paul : ' The seal of our apostleship are ye in the Lord.' Apostolical succession, we hold, is something not mechanically conveyed, but spiritually realized. We ministers of our common Methodism proclaim the apostolic gospel, we fulfil an apostolic ministry, and we can claim, thank God, the apostolic confirmation of ' signs following.'

A. L. Humphries.

HYMN :

My heart is full of Christ, and longs
  Its glorious matter to declare !
Of Him I make my loftier songs,
  I cannot from His praise forbear ;
My ready tongue makes haste to sing
The glories of my heavenly King.

Fairer than all the earth-born race,
  Perfect in comeliness Thou art ;
Replenished are Thy lips with grace,
  And full of love Thy tender heart :
God ever blest ! we bow the knee,
And own all fullness dwells in Thee.

Gird on Thy thigh the Spirit's sword,
  And take to Thee Thy power divine ;
Stir up Thy strength, almighty Lord,
  All power and majesty are Thine :
Assert Thy worship and renown ;
O all-redeeming God, come down !

Come, and maintain Thy righteous cause,
  And let Thy glorious toil succeed ;
Dispread the victory of Thy cross,
  Ride on, and prosper in Thy deed ;
Through earth triumphantly ride on,
And reign in every heart alone.

THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE LOCAL PREACHER

The primary thing, and the most essential, in a preacher's life is the call to preach. That is fundamental. The poet writes, 'I do but sing because I must.' For the preacher it should be equally true to cry, 'I do but preach because I must.'

The call! What is it? John Wesley's answer is helpful. In a series of questions he asks: 'Have the would-be preachers,

> 'i. Grace?—Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them?
>
> 'ii. Gifts?—Have they a clear, sound understanding? Has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?
>
> 'iii. Fruit?—Are any truly convinced of sin and converted to God by their preaching?'

And then he adds, 'As long as these three marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach.'

Once he rode post-haste from Bristol to London to stop the gross irregularity of Thomas Maxfield, a layman, who was preaching to the 'Methodist Society.' Providentially, he met his own mother, who said to him, 'John, this young man is as surely called of God to preach as you are.' On hearing Maxfield himself, he found this judgement to be true. Thus, in 1742, Wesley permitted and promoted one of the most far-reaching innovations in the history of the Christian Church. It is this call of the Holy Spirit

demonstrated by the sure signs of His grace, His gifts and His fruits which relates the opportunity of the local preacher organically to the prophetic ministry of the Apostolic Church.

To-day, there are in British Methodism 13,000 Primitive Methodist ; 4,500 United Methodist; 19,000 Wesleyan Methodist local preachers; in all, a total of 36,500. This number includes more than five hundred women. They are found in all the professions and among every grade of manual worker. For the first time in the history of British Governments, a local preacher is Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Others are Members of Parliament ; another one of His Majesty's judges. There are civil servants, university and college professors, heads of secondary and council schools, teachers, doctors, solicitors and prominent men in the world of commerce. The early leaders of the Trade Union movement were local preachers. Several are evangelists and lay agents engaged by the Home Mission Committee or employed by particular Circuits. Local preachers are found in the factory and on the farm, in mine and mart, in shop and ship, in the office and at the forge, in the police force, on the railway, in the officers' mess and in the ranks of the Navy, Army and Air Force. The ordinary life-work of the women is almost proportionately varied.

Here, with regretful respect, may be named one of the most influential local preachers in the annals of the Methodist Church—the late Dr. Peake.

These tens of thousands are they who have recognized, and responded to, the divine call to preach, and vast numbers of them are, Sunday by Sunday, gladly and zealously yielding themselves to its imperious demand. These are facts that every Methodist should know ; while beginners in the work, and local preachers in lonely places in our wide country-side, should find enhearten-ment and an inspiration in the remembrance that they

are members of an order, very worthy and very honourable.

The opportunity and responsibility of the local preacher to-day are alike unique. We live, not only in a new age, but in a period of transition, and many new adjustments may be necessitated. As wider and clearer horizons appear, fresh scope for the skill and service of the local preacher must arise.

There is already a call to him for the rekindling of a glorious ideal. There is an urge at this present time for the reinforcement of an old emphasis. Preaching is verily a useless task unless it is done with the conviction of a glowing assurance. His message must resound with the note of authority. But what authority? What is the authority that is in accord with the spirit of the gospel and the attitude of Jesus? The teaching of Jesus concerning God, with whatever that may imply in the relationship of God to man and of man to God, surely grew out of, and rested upon, His own personal and human experience. As Mr. Gossip points out in his latest book, in that humble Galilean home, and amid all that life meant to Jesus in the ordinary, work-a-day world, He first tested and proved what later He taught. The truths enshrined in His evangel were all-sufficient for Him, as Man among men. Therefore they would be alike satisfactory to those who would follow Him. He spake, because He knew by experience.

Is there any wonder, therefore, that when He, the ideal preacher, appeared, the fisherman should leave his nets, the shepherd his sheep and the husbandman his vineyard, to go to hear the new prophet? We are not surprised that in city street, on mountain-side and on the sea-shore, 'the myriad of the multitudes' thronged amazed, for 'He taught them as having authority.'

Shall we not, therefore, ask, Has the preacher an

awareness of God? Does he company with Jesus? Is he assured that, as Dr. McConnell asserted at Lausanne, 'The Spirit at the heart of the universe is that of Christ'? And is he realizing that his present Christian experience stands the shocks of life unfailingly and victoriously? If so, then he has his authority. He needs no other. There is no other to equal that. And, to quote Dr. Glover, himself a lay preacher of much renown, he will be a 'preacher without a "perhaps."'

You will no doubt wish me to re-affirm that this experience must be an *informed* one; that it must be enriched by that light which only the lamp of knowledge can give. A preacher's past experiences may abide. They become memory's charge. She wraps them in her mantle-folds and keeps them through the years. But he will press on in his pursuit of knowledge and the quest of truth, that he may become the better equipped for fulfilling one of the highest vocations given to man.

Never were there such advantages for this improvement in mental efficiency as there are to-day. The College Committee of the United Methodist Church, the Local Preachers' Training Committee of the Primitive Methodist Church and the Wesleyan Connexional Local Preachers' Committee, provide correspondence courses designed to help from the beginning any one becoming a local preacher. Through the period when he is 'on trial,' or is 'a candidate for the Plan,' he can have expert guidance in his reading and sermon preparation. These studies may be continued under similar tuition through succeeding years. There are Connexional Examinations, too, for local preachers on trial, and others for those fully accredited. These have been arranged in order to stimulate the highest endeavour possible, and to aid in enhancing the power of the pulpit's influence.

Very many Circuits have Local Preachers' Study Circles.

It is a pleasing aspect that in each of the Churches a revival of interest in preaching has taken place in recent years. Numbers of young people are possessors of healthy Christian assurances and ideals, and are responding to the appeal to become preachers because of them. This information comes from the Wesleyan Publishing House : ' We are surprised at the interest that is being shown by the young men of Methodism in the direction of study. Every day we are receiving numerous inquiries about books from candidates for the ministry and other young local preachers.' The added comment is, ' This is a very good sign.' The ardent local preacher, passionately devoted to the service of his calling, his hearers and his Lord, will ever be ready to take as one of the working principles of his life the injunction, ' Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind.'

There is an opportunity confronting local preachers which will require close consideration in the near future, namely the clamant demand for *Open-Air Preaching*. In many places open-air preaching is being done. But is it not possible that in every Circuit some of the younger men should definitely undertake this work? This would necessitate specific training. If this purpose could be achieved, other young people would undoubtedly rally to the call of such an adventurous crusade, and a revival of preaching might result such as has not been known since the mighty times of Wesley.

R. Arthur Button.

III

THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN

'It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all flesh: And your sons *and your daughters* shall prophesy. . . . Yea, on My bondmen *and My bondwomen* in those days will I pour forth of My Spirit, and they shall prophesy.' It may seem at first sight a long way from these words of Peter at Pentecost to our modern phrase 'the worth of personality,' but the meaning is the same, and, if there had been no Pentecost, there would have been no doctrine of the ultimate value of personality. And women are persons. The Spirit belongs to them as certainly as to men. Without Him their personality, like men's, is maimed and incomplete; with Him, it develops and grows unto perfection. Pentecost gave Christian womanhood its charter.

And then we find Paul writing to Corinth to say that he does not 'permit women to teach'! And that they must wear veils! At first sight it looks like a flat contradiction. What are we to make of it? Was Paul a Mohammedan before Mohammed?

The answer, of course, is that there are some principles that you cannot fully practise in the world until you have made the world ready for their practice. John Woolman, of New Jersey, is one of the most famous of the Quakers. He went about among the Friends of America in the middle of the eighteenth century testifying against slavery. Yet even in some of the houses where he found his opportunities of testifying, slaves had cooked the food he ate, made the

bed he slept on, and so on. He insisted on paying for his board, but even so he could not fully practise his own principle and do altogether without slave-labour. Before he could do that, his world must change its mind. This truth has many illustrations in the realm of womanhood. In Paul's day an unveiled woman in Corinth was an impure woman, and even a woman who spoke in public laid herself open to the repute of shamelessness. It was not wise, perhaps not possible, to practise the equality of the sexes in that kind of world. The world must be made ready for the full practice of the principle, before the principle could be fully practised.

This brings us to the unique and characteristic quality of Christianity in the realm of womanhood. It alone, among the religions of the world, admits and preaches the full personality of woman ; it, and it alone, has set itself so to change the world as to make the practice of that high principle possible. A historical comparison will perhaps make my meaning clear. To-day the Christian world is admitting women to the realms of education, art, and culture, as it has never done before. There was a time when Greek civilization did much the same with some women. I refer to the age of Pericles—that is, to the period when Greek civilization reached its high water mark. In the brilliant circle whose centre was Pericles there were women. The most famous of them was Aspasia. She could take her part with the men in every cultured discussion. But she was Pericles' mistress. And all the women in that brilliant group were of the same class. It was taken for granted that a woman who joined in the life of culture alongside men would belong to that class. There were, of course, respectable women in Athens, but they dwelt apart, in the shelter of their husbands' and fathers' private houses. Culture and freedom were not for them. In

other words, Athenian civilization took it for granted that for women there was a choice between culture—in the true, deep sense—and purity. A woman might have either, but she could not have both. To-day Christian civilization demands that woman shall have the opportunity of both. And it begins to find the way to give her that opportunity.

But while it is true that Christianity alone has taught the true value of woman's personality, and alone has sought so to change the world as to make possible the practice of that high principle, it is also true that Christianity has set about this task spasmodically, slowly, and often hesitatingly. Usually, whenever there has been a fresh outburst of spiritual power in Christian history—a new Pentecost—there has for a time been a large place given to the ministry of women—the word 'ministry' now being used in its widest sense. But, as the new vigour has spent itself, as order has supervened on the released freedom, there has been a certain drawing back and reluctance. This has happened in part because, when first the new outpouring of grace came, the Church has not realized that the world was not yet ready for the full practice of woman's personality, and later has found out its mistake. But it has happened, I think, also in part because the Church itself has been half unwilling to keep the ground she has gained. Yet, on the whole, there has been progress, however slowly and spasmodically. For instance, after the first Pentecost we find a woman named Priscilla instructing such an one as Apollos. A distinguished modern professor even thinks that she wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews. And Philip the evangelist had four daughters who 'prophesied.' Such phenomena, however, passed away in a century. Yet something else was permanently gained. From the first, women took their places with men at the Lord's Table. It is impossible for us to imagine what

a gulf had been crossed when some poor slave-girl crept forward to kneel beside a Roman citizen and to share equally with him in the intimacy of God. That ground was won once and for ever.

It is time that we passed to Methodism in particular. The preamble has been a little long, but not, I think, needlessly so. When the Pentecost of the eighteenth century befell, the old phenomena appeared. In the first heyday of that revival there were several women-preachers.[1] One of them, in all probability, is the prototype of the woman preacher in *Adam Bede*. Wesley, with his love of order and reverence for the customs of the Church's past, didn't quite know what to do with them. He tried hard to say 'yes' and 'no' at the same time. He told one of them that she might pray in public, and might intersperse her prayers with four or five minutes' exhortation now and then, but that she had better avoid the taking of a text or a continuous address. Again, he wrote that he must needs allow that it was an 'extraordinary' thing for a woman to be called to preach—it was one of God's exceptions—but then he adds that the whole Methodist movement was 'extraordinary' too. And he says, 'God owns women in the conversion of sinners, and who am I that I should withstand God?' The Countess of Huntingdon attended his Conference in 1762. As far as I know, she wasn't a woman preacher, so I suppose she must have been the first lay representative! Think of that, my sisters! One of you was in Conference before any layman! Also, Wesley gave at least one woman formal authority 'as a preacher in our Connexion,' and there is evidence that he gave another woman half a promise that she should come

[1] The facts about Wesley below are gathered from Townsend, Workman, and Eayrs's *New History of Methodism*, i., p. 322; Tyerman's *John Wesley*, ii., pp. 448, 534; and the *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, xiv., pp. 2, 104 ff.

to Conference ! But, as our Church took order and settled down, the woman preacher disappeared. Perhaps her day was not yet, for the Primitive Methodists, I believe, made a similar experiment a generation or so later, with a similar result. Yet the Evangelical Revival did secure permanent triumphs for the ministry of women. One of its products was the Sunday School. Its reputed founder was Robert Raikes ; but a Methodist woman started a Sunday School in High Wycombe fourteen years before Raikes opened his, and the place of women in Sunday Schools has never been challenged. So we pass at last beyond Paul's ' I permit not a woman to teach.' Again, from the first there were women class-leaders in Methodism, and the class-leader, of course, had a definite ' cure of souls,' to borrow the Anglican phrase. This was to give her a large and permanent place in the highest work of the Church. So far as I know, no Church had ever before so whole-heartedly and extensively done this thing.[1] It is less important, yet interesting, that as class-leaders women had a place in the administration of our Church from the beginning. I need only allude to the later development of the Wesley Deaconess Order. Try, however, to imagine what Methodism would be like if every woman Sunday-school teacher, every woman class-leader, and every Wesley Deaconess were to disappear from our Church work to-morrow morning ! Yes, the Evangelical Revival, our Pentecost, brought permanent progress. Here too we may say, ' What hath God wrought ! '

I find that almost all Methodists agree that the time must come when women will be admitted to the ordained ministry, but they are not agreed whether the time for this has yet come. I pass from this—as the Congress is no place for controversy—to a more

[1] The Society of Friends anticipated it, in its own way.

general subject. It is the custom of many to depreciate the present age. On the contrary, I think that the men of the future will look back upon it as a great age. And the emancipation of woman will be reckoned one of its chief achievements. I need not recapitulate the details of this advance. It has its risks, its serious risks; but I am one of those who believe that they can at last be run. For I believe two other things—that behind all the movement for giving woman her true place in life as man's equal there is the Christian impulse ; and I believe that, if Christian womanhood will put forth its strength, it can secure, not only that the coming of equality shall conserve all that is best in the great past of womanhood, but that the rapid changes of to-day shall bring good and not evil to woman and the world. There is here a hard task, but it is God-given, and it falls to all Methodists, and especially to all Methodist women, to take their part in it.

C. Ryder Smith.

HYMN :

A CHARGE to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky :

To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfil :
O may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will !

Arm me with jealous care,
As in Thy sight to live ;
And O Thy servant, Lord, prepare
A strict account to give !

Help me to watch and pray,
And on Thyself rely,
Assured, if I my trust betray,
I shall for ever die.

SILENCE AND BRIEF LITANY :

From moral weakness of spirit, from timidity, from fear of men and dread of responsibility, strengthen us with courage to speak the truth as our witness for Thee requires, with the strength that can yet speak in love and self-control, and alike from the weakness of hasty violence and the weakness of moral cowardice,

Save us and help us, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

From affectation and untruth, conscious and unconscious, from pretence and acting a part which is hypocrisy, from love of flattery, from over ready belief in praise, from dislike of criticism and hatred of independence, from the comfort of self-deception in persuading ourselves that others think better than the truth of us,

Save us and help us, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

From all love of display and sacrifice to popularity, from thought of ourselves and forgetfulness of Thee in our worship, from desire ever to have our own way in all things, hold Thou our minds in spiritual reverence, that if we sing we may sing unto the Lord, and if we pray we may pray with the Spirit, and in all our words and works from self-glorification,

Save us and help us, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

In times of doubt and questionings, when our belief is perplexed by new learning and new teachings, when our faith is strained by creeds, by doctrines, by mysteries beyond our understanding, give us the faithfulness of learners and the courage of believers in Thee ; give us boldness to examine, and faith to trust all truth, patience and insight to master difficulties, stability to hold fast our tradition with enlightened interpretation, to admit all fresh truth made known to us, and in times of testing to grasp new knowledge reverently, and to combine it honestly with the old ; from stubborn rejection of new revelations as from hasty assurance that we are wiser than our fathers,

Save us and help us, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

Finally, O Lord, we humbly beseech Thee, blot out our past transgressions, heal the evils of our past negligencies and ignorances, enable us to amend our past mistakes and misunderstandings, uplift our hearts to new love, new energy, and devotion, that we may be unburthened from the grief and shame of our past faithlessness to go forth in Thy strength, to persevere through success and failure, through good report and evil even to the end, and in all time of our tribulation, in all time of our wealth,

Save us and help us, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

IV

THE METHODIST EMPHASIS—'A FREE, FULL, PRESENT SALVATION'

We who are the children of the great revival have been strengthening and enheartening ourselves for our impending task. We have noted the events in our history that assure us of a prophetic ministry evidencing the presence of God's Holy Spirit. We have no doubt whatever that it is holy and apostolic ; we claim within it, beside the service and utterance of those ordained, that also of laymen and women. We have now to ask ourselves, What is the subject, what the message of this ministry ? And the answer is that if we are to be faithful to our inheritance we must declare to all, as did Wesley's first preachers :

Salvation—Free, Present, Full.

We have to assert with the utmost conviction and joy, as the best news in the world, that God willeth all men to be saved. But what do we mean by that ? Saved from what ? The pity of it is that the expression of a great truth quickly degenerates into a cant phrase. We need in prophet and hearer a great sense of reality to 'depolarize' the words *save* and *salvation* from associations of glib and sanctimonious use.

First let us realize that salvation is a process ; it is a being, *and a becoming* saved. Only twice in the New Testament is the perfect tense of the verb *save* used. In fact, the whole of Revelation is thrilling with the

idea of a great purpose of God fulfilling itself in man through a mighty *growth*. We have to declare that there is no moral aimlessness in the world, and bid men behold the mighty sweep of the development and accomplishment of that *aim* of God. It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that we shall be like Him. Now, in God, from His very nature, is Life. All the life we feel thrilling around us is something that emanates from Him. We can trace it from the lowest cell in the depths of the ocean upwards right through developing vegetable forms, then higher on through the animal world, with instinct becoming more and more manifest, till in man there is the nobler manifestation which we call *mental* life. Every form of life, from the elementary reaching out for food up to the genius of Shakespeare and of Newton, is all something of and from God. But for *man* this is insufficient. In every single individual there comes a still higher life in the power of perceiving God ; and, loftier still, we see as goal the *life eternal* of which Jesus speaks. Though everlastingness is necessarily included, the adjective denotes quality rather than quantity, for eternal life is to know God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. *This*, then, is God's aim for every man, and all experience of individual and race is the unresting unfolding of the divine purpose, eternal life. The history of religion presupposes the sensitiveness of the soul of man to the divine ; the history of man as a religious being is the interaction between this susceptibility and the Holy manifested. The accomplishment of the purpose of God and the gaining of eternal life is the bliss we call heaven, the spoiling of that purpose and the missing of eternal life is the tragedy we call hell.

It is sin that spoils that purpose and ruins life, sin that separates us from God—and separation from God is death. He to whom comes home that awful

reality cries out, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?' And Christ, who came to tell us of the Father's purpose of love and life, offers us salvation from that separation and that death. Wesley and his preachers were smitten through and through with the glory of that purpose and the unutterable pain to God and unspeakable loss to man in man's spoiling of it. They had personally been so convinced of sin, had felt such bitter penitence, and had experienced so mighty a joy in the assurance of forgiveness in Christ, that they went everywhere proclaiming with shining face that 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.' Then ensued the mighty results that have permanently enriched the whole Church Catholic of God. Each living soul set other souls on fire, until from end to end of England there was a holy, blazing witness of men who fled from wrath to come and declared that they were consciously freed from their sins. We note that they fled from wrath to come. And yet the great discovery was the old fundamental truth that God is love, that there is a Friend at the heart of the Universe, that the Almighty on the throne is the All-Loving in the heart. Such a sense of love as comes from a full knowledge of God in Christ blisters a sensitive soul worse than the corrosive smitings of mere official justice. The wrath of the Lamb is infinitely more terrible than the brandished thunderbolts of Jupiter. Wounded Holy Love is utterly unbearable.

Let us think again what is the message of the New Testament which crowned the Old. Through the ages the Holy God had been drawing aside veil after veil from His face, had been whispering to the growing spiritual intelligence of His child more and more intimate revealings of Himself, had been calling forth

more and more that *faith* which means mutual understanding between man and God. Then in the fullness of the time, when the child was ready for it, God proved for ever the kinship, for He expressed Himself in manhood as far as Godhead can be expressed in manhood. There came the Perfect Man, showing the ideal that was in the mind of God when He made outside of Himself a being in His own image to receive His love and to love Him in return. Early poetry heard, when man was created, the morning stars singing together and the Sons of God shouting for joy. When *the* Son of God came angels sang, 'Glory to God,' and man, transported with joy at the thought, shouted, 'O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God.' God, who in many broken bits and in many fashions spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, in the last days spoke by a Son. Ever since then we have known the Father. We know what God is like because we have seen His Son and He has told us. And He despaired of none of us; His beautiful life allowed sin to do its worst with it; His cross has given a new standard of the vileness of sin. At the beginning of His spotless human life the sudden sense of the divine made startled Peter cry out, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.' In the early years after His triumph Paul came to Him, called himself the worst of sinners, and cried, 'He died for me and gave Himself for me.' The sense of sin first repels and then attracts. Faith is the attitude of soul which sees sinful self as it is and Christ as He is, which, in the despair of self, commits the whole of life and being to Holy Love, convinced by Christ's life and death that God's heart is all love and His purpose life, so that whoso believeth on God's only begotten Son hath eternal life. Salvation is being in tune with God's great purpose, and therefore being saved from sin. The start of salvation is conversion.

Early Methodism, then, witnessed to the reality of salvation, free, present, and full. Have we, to-day, still value in the spiritual wares we offer? The characteristic of the age is a decay in the sense of sin. A distinguished and devout man of science reminds us that to-day men are not worrying about their sins. Undoubtedly the Christian has the right to say that His Saviour has taken away that worry and that he has peace with God. But that is not what is meant by the sentence quoted. There is a noticeable lack of the sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Shall we find the world answering with indifference our witness to the offer of salvation, because it needs it not?

There never was a time when the character of Jesus Christ was more appreciated and admired than now. We have all read about the Christ of the Indian Road, and know that, far beyond the boundaries of acknowledged Christianity, He stands peerless. In our own England our generous and eager youth, utterly alien from mere tradition and convention, are enthusiastic for Him. Multitudes of the Student Christian Movement rejoice in Him as present Companion and Friend. But we rarely hear them speaking of Him as Saviour. This is partly a reaction from the narrowness which compressed conversion into one iron-bound type of the instantaneous and the convulsive. It is natural that the child of a Christian home, dedicated and trained, should *grow* into the Kingdom. Yet the elemental experiences and needs of human nature have not changed. The Blest Companion's presence is the joy of the days of youth and strength and sunshine. When the later years bring the storms, there is a greater need and a deeper meaning; then will the Companion be realized as the Saviour without whom man cannot live. We need not fear; our doctrine and our witness are indispensable still. The greatest optimist is bound to recognize sin in this world of danger, disillusionment,

war, and rapine. The cheeriest youth recognizes that something has gone gravely wrong with the fulfilment of God's purposes, and that sin is the cause. Ere long he who truly and earnestly longs for the Kingdom of Heaven is bound to realize his own share in that sin. Even he who has grown up in that Kingdom must know that there comes the moment of full decision of the will which registers conversion. And as he feels the grimness of the wrong, and shares in the agony of the world, he comes afresh to the meaning of the suffering of Christ, bearing the sins of the world. In the storm he feels his own share in that sin, his own utter impotence, and stakes all on the only might that is sufficient. He needs salvation. From the one sermon I heard Spurgeon preach one sentence alone abides with me. It is this : ' And now let us have some delicious sorrow for sin.' I know what he meant. Have we ever seen a more sunshiny sight than the face of a naughty child when it has promised to be good ? The tears are still there, but the sunshine casts rainbows over them. Verily the consciousness of sin is the first word of the gospel, the good news. The dear Companion and Friend, is, above all, Saviour too. We need not doubt. Phrases may change, terms may alter, but mankind will always need salvation.

In Wesley's days it was necessary to stress the fact that the salvation offered is *free* to all. The echoes of the controversy between Calvinist and Arminian have died away now. All recognize the complementary truths of God's purpose, His absolute grace, His universal love, the free will of man, and the power of his faith. The God who is love made man outside Himself, in His own likeness, to receive love and to return it. And, that there might be moral value in man's love of God, the Almighty deliberately limited Himself by giving him free will. His loving spirit ever impresses upon man that the highest use of his free will is

willingly to choose God's will. The Heavenly Father is Holy Love, and offers salvation absolutely free to *every* man ; every man may have it. And it is a *present* salvation. It may be realized instantaneously ; it may dawn gradually. But the penitent soul that is conscious of being out of tune with the purpose of God, the sin-stricken man who in self-despair casts himself on the one Saviour with full belief that He alone can love him free from sin, finds a Holy Spirit bearing witness with his spirit that he is a child of God. Wesley's emphasis on Paul's testimony sounded strange in men's ears, and he who declared he knew his sins forgiven was branded as monstrously impertinent. *Now* this truth is the possession of the whole Church Catholic, but there is still need of the continued joyous witness to its glorious fact. And, above all, it is *full* salvation. We have stressed the fact that salvation is a perpetual growth. When we are born again we are in a state of salvation which broadens more and more unto the perfect day. There is no limit to the love of God, no break in the purpose of God, no failure in the power of God ; the only limit is in the faith and love of man. Wesley preached Perfect Love. He never claimed to have attained it, but he undoubtedly entered it. There has been misunderstanding, and claims have been made not accompanied by the humility which is an essential characteristic of holiness, so that the actual witness to the doctrine has been somewhat obscured in our own communions. Perhaps it is preached more clearly now in other sections of the Church. Oh that we, at this crisis of our Methodist history, may assure ourselves afresh of the power of the Holy Spirit to cleanse from all sin, to enable us to love the Lord our God with *all* our heart and mind and soul and strength, and our neighbour as ourself! Even beyond this there is a possible growth, for the new commandment bids us love each other *even as He*

loved us. And He never commands more than His Holy Spirit can enable us to attain. It is a salvation to be experienced by every one of us, at this moment, and to the uttermost, while each mountain-top attained will reveal another beyond. How well Charles Wesley sums it up :

Jesus, the First and Last,
On Thee my soul is cast :
Thou didst Thy work begin
By blotting out my sin ;
Thou wilt the root remove
And perfect me in love.

Yet when the work is done,
The work is but begun :
Partaker of Thy Grace,
I long to see Thy Face ;
The first I prove below,
The last I die to know.

WILLIAM T. A. BARBER.

LET US MEDITATE on the meaning and mystery of the Grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A pardon written with His blood.

Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

The favour and the peace of God.

Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

The seeing eye, the feeling sense,
The mystic joys of penitence.

Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

The godly grief, the pleasing smart,
The meltings of a broken heart,
The tears that tell your sins forgiven,
The sighs that waft your souls to heaven.

Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

The guiltless shame, the sweet distress,
The unutterable tenderness,
The genuine, meek humility,
The wonder—Why such love to me?

Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

The o'erwhelming power of saving grace,

Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

The sight that veils the seraph's face,

Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

The speechless awe that dares not move,

Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

And all the silent heaven of love.

Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

SILENT PRAYER.

BENEDICTION.

II

THE MINISTRY OF THE SACRAMENTS

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J. ERNEST RATTENBURY, D.D.
Wesleyan Methodist Church

In the New Testament and in the Church the Ministry of the Word is co-ordinated with the Ministry of the Sacraments. John Wesley undoubtedly organized his people on the basis of a Sacramental Society. The early Methodists were both evangelical and sacramental in a remarkable degree. Wesley's ideal was that the Supper of the Lord should be administered on every Lord's Day. As far as possible, this was the constant practice in the earliest Methodist chapels. The Sunday Morning Service normally consisted of the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Lord's Supper—a perfect synthesis of evangelical and sacramental fellowship. The great numbers of communicants at these Sunday Morning Communion Services is a most surprising feature of the Methodist Revival.

The religious issues of the present hour make it of great importance to consider afresh, with frankness of mind and spiritual concern, the true and scriptural relation between the New Testament Evangel and its supreme symbol—the Lord's Supper. We need to relate Sacramental Grace and Evangelical Experience. We may do this without the slightest approach to a sacerdotal conception of sacramental values, and without the least depreciation of the supreme value of a Prophetic Ministry. An essential part of the present responsibility of the Methodist Church may well be an enriched witness to the sureness and reality of spiritual grace received by faithful and believing souls, in obedience to our Lord's command, 'Do this in remembrance of Me.'

HYMN :

WITH glorious clouds encompassed round,
Whom angels dimly see,
Will the Unsearchable be found,
Or God appear to me ?

Will He forsake His throne above,
Himself to worms impart ?
Answer, Thou Man of grief and love,
And speak it to my heart !

In manifested love explain
Thy wonderful design :
What meant the suffering Son of Man,
The streaming blood divine ?

Come then, and to my soul reveal
The heights and depths of grace,
The wounds which all my sorrows heal,
That dear disfigured face.

HERE IN SILENCE let us recollect once again the scene in the Upper Room.

'The Institution of the Supper' – – 1 Cor. xi. 23–32
'The Mystic Fellowship' – – – John vi. 53–59

SILENT PRAYER.

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name ; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

I

THE LORD'S SUPPER IN EARLY METHODISM

At the head of one of John Wesley's sermons there is a note which is probably unique in literature. The sermon itself was written in 1733, when Wesley was thirty years of age. The note was added fifty-five years later, when he was an old man of eighty-five. They had been years of unimaginable change, in the Church and in the world, but more than all in Wesley himself—in his opinions, his practices, his inner life. And this is what he wrote : 'The following discourse was written above five and fifty years ago for the use of my pupils at Oxford. . . . I thank God I have *not yet* seen cause to alter my sentiments in any point which is therein delivered.' These had been his views all through the years ; these convictions had coloured his thinking and affected all his practice. And he thought it right to say so.

The sermon is No. 101. The text is, 'Do this in remembrance of Me,' and the title of the sermon is, 'The Duty of Constant Communion.' The teaching of the sermon is startling, even to ears accustomed to the words of Oxford preachers of a later day. It is an argued, emphatic insistence upon the necessity of receiving the communion as often as we possibly can. Our opportunity is the one rule of our duty.

If the teaching is startling to us, it must have been far more so to those who heard it first. There never was a time in all the long history of the English Church

when the communion was more utterly neglected. In most parish churches it was observed only three or four times in the year. Secker, the Bishop of Oxford, in addressing his clergy in 1741, pleaded that 'a sacrament might be interposed in the long interval between Whitsuntide and Christmas.' In 1763, out of 310 churches in Essex there were only twenty that had a communion so often as once a month. In the prayer-books of the period the Communion Service was often printed in the smallest available type as being most suitable for one of the 'occasional offices' of the Church. It was to such a Church as this that Wesley proclaimed his doctrine of the Duty of Constant Communion; in such a Church he sought to practise it himself, and to raise up a body of faithful people who should do the same.

It is my purpose to inquire:

I. To what extent, in this respect, did Wesley practise what he preached?

II. To what extent did he persuade the Methodists to do the same? And

III. What difference, if any, was made to Wesley's sacramentarianism by his evangelical conversion?

I. The first of these questions it would have been impossible to answer a few years ago before the deciphering of Wesley's shorthand diary. By means of this diary we are able to trace his every movement from day to day and almost from hour to hour. The first entire year in which the diary enables us to do so is the year beginning June 1, 1740. During that year Wesley records in his diary that he took communion ninety-one times—that is, on the average, once every four days. This was at the beginning of the Methodist Revival. Towards its close the diary enables us to follow Wesley's hourly acts for the last eight years of his

earthly life. The number of Communion Services he records during these years represents an average of seventy-two a year, or one in about every five days. The last communion mentioned is on February 16, 1791, a fortnight before the aged pilgrim reached his goal. It was the fifteenth he had taken since the New Year came in.

The services were usually held on Sunday in the forenoon, but there are constantly recurring records of participation in the Lord's Supper on Saturday evenings. These services were held about six o'clock, often in private houses, and were apparently intended as a preparation for the Sabbath. There are hardly any records of sacramental services in the early morning, and none at all of 'fasting' communion in the modern Anglo-Catholic sense. This is the more remarkable considering Wesley's emphasis on fasting in other connexions. One other habit of his revealed by the diary should be mentioned; it was his custom to hold a Communion Service every day for the twelve days after Christmas.

On the whole, in answer to our first question, we may state with reasonable confidence that, throughout his apostolic life, Wesley approached the Table of the Lord once in about every five days. This is how he fulfilled his own doctrine of the Duty of Constant Communion.

II. Our second question is, 'To what extent did Wesley persuade the Methodists to follow his example?' The intention of Wesley is quite clear: it was that the Methodists should attend the communion at every opportunity; and there can be little doubt that in his opinion the opportunity should occur, as a rule, every Sabbath day. In 1784, he wrote to the Methodists of the newly formed United States: 'I advise the elders to administer the Supper of the Lord on every Lord's

day.' Such was his own practice in the earliest Methodist chapels in London and elsewhere as often as the circumstances made it possible. The attendance at these Sunday morning communions forms one of the most astonishing features of the Methodist Revival.

Here are two entries relating to two consecutive Sundays in 1743 : ' May 29. I preached at West Street on the Gospel for the day, and afterwards administered the Lord's Supper to some hundreds of communicants. I was a little afraid at first that my strength would not suffice, when a service of five hours (for it lasted from ten to three) was added to my usual employment.' On the following Sunday at the same place the service lasted nearly six hours, and Wesley writes : ' I found it needful for the time to come to divide the communicants into three parts, so that we might not have above 600 at once.' Comment on these simple but amazing statements seems almost an irreverence. One would like to know when and where in the long history of the Church of Christ such services were paralleled. But, for Wesley, they were merely added to his ' usual employment.' His day was six hours old when they began, and when they ended he would hurry off to preach to the unmissioned multitudes of Moorfields. Then he met the leaders, and after them the bands.

Similar quotations with regard to London Methodism might be multiplied, and the records concerning the principal Methodist centres in the provinces tell the same story. At Bristol, in 1770, ' my brother and I agreed to administer the Lord's Supper every other Sunday. We judged it best to have the entire service, and so began at 9 o'clock.' In the following year we read : ' We had above 650 communicants at Bristol ' ; in 1780, ' The largest number of communicants that had ever met in the new room ' ; frequently ' many hundreds ' are mentioned, and in 1784 a thousand.

At Leeds, Wesley mentions 700 communicants in 1779, and on a public thanksgiving day in 1784 no less than 1,600 or 1,700, with five clergymen to assist him. In 1789 he had 1,500 or 1,600, with two clergymen to assist him. Similar astonishing figures are quoted in connexion with Oldham Street Chapel, Manchester, on the site of the present Central Hall. In 1781 : 'I began reading prayers at ten. At the communion was such a sight as I am persuaded was never seen at Manchester before, 1,100 or 1,200 communicants at once and all of them fearing God.' At Manchester also he mentions 1,300 in 1787 ; 1,000 in 1788, and 1,600 in 1790.

At Newcastle, Birmingham, Sheffield, Plymouth, Bath, Dublin, Cork, he quotes figures which vary from 300 to 800, and the smaller places are not lost sight of. At Redmire, in the Yorkshire dales, he says, 'We had fifty communicants from a village of thirty houses.'

It might be thought that some of these figures were open to suspicion, but we must remember that they can be tested to some extent, not only by the seating capacity of the buildings, but also by the recorded time required to complete the communion. Wesley frequently went on communicating the people far into the afternoon—once till nearly 4 o'clock.

However, it was not in Methodist chapels but in the parish churches that Wesley wished the great body of the Methodists to communicate. But the difficulties were grave : in the first place there generally was no Communion Service in the church at all, and, when there was, the Methodists were frequently repelled from the Table. Still, Wesley's success in this respect is most remarkable, at all events when he himself is present, or when the local clergyman is in sympathy with his work. On August 3, 1740, 'at St. Luke's, our parish church in London, there was such a sight as was

never seen there before—several hundred communicants, from whose faces one might judge that they indeed sought Him that was crucified.' In 1742 he has a similar entry with regard to All Saints', in Newcastle. At Macclesfield parish church he mentions 800 communicants in 1782, 700 in 1783, 1,200 in 1785, and 1,300 on Good Friday of 1788. At Haworth the communicants crowded the church, and he mentions 1,000 in 1757.

But it is to be feared that when Wesley was not with them the Lord's Table in the parish churches had no very powerful hold upon the Methodists. Great numbers of them had rarely been to church in all their lives. At Bristol, Charles Wesley, with his Kingswood miners, was repelled. At Epworth, in 1743, John Wesley himself was refused the sacrament : ' Pray tell Mr. Wesley I shall not give him the sacrament, for he is not fit,' was the message of the curate. Bishop Richmond, of the Isle of Man, in his pastoral letter for 1776 required every one of his clergy to repel any Methodist preacher from Holy Communion.

On all the evidence, the answer to our second question must be that Wesley succeeded beyond all expectations in persuading the Methodists to ' Constant Communion ' where and when the opportunity was given them in their own places of worship ; that he succeeded also, though to a less extent, in getting them to communicate at the parish churches when he himself was present, but that there is little evidence of such attendance in his absence, or in the absence of some clergyman in sympathy with him.

III. The third question is : ' What difference, if any, was made to Wesley's sacramentarianism by his evangelical conversion ? ' At first sight very little difference can be perceived at all. His outward habit remained much the same, and he took little part in the

age-long controversies which centre in the Eucharist. In 1745 he published, for the instruction of the Methodists, an abbreviated edition of Dr. Brevint's book, *The Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice*, and bound up with the little volume 166 hymns on the Lord's Supper—'by John Wesley and Charles Wesley.'

The Conference of 1825 ordered Brevint's treatise to be republished, and 'advised the preachers to revive the general use of the sacramental hymns'; but soon afterwards came the days of the 'Oxford Movement,' and, in the reaction from Newman's teaching, Wesley's sacramental hymns became suspect. Yet they were published several years after his evangelical conversion and he never gave a hint that there was anything in them to which at any time he took exception.

But there can be no sort of doubt that great and essential changes had taken place in Wesley's sacramentarianism. They are not obvious at first sight, but they are vital.

1. In the first place, Wesley ceased to be a sacerdotalist. In the Methodist order of service there is scarcely any change from the Anglican order. But there is one tiny alteration which marks the watershed between the two great Oxford Movements, all the world of difference between Newman and Wesley. In the Anglican order the minister says, 'Almighty God . . . pardon and deliver you from all your sins.' Wesley quietly alters all the pronouns, and reads, 'Pardon and deliver *us*.' Both Newman and Wesley were sacramentarians, though in very different senses; but Wesley, at all events after 1738, has no trace of sacerdotalism.

2. Associated with this change is another, relating to what we in these days call 'inter-communion.' Before 1738 he would admit to the Table no one who had not been episcopally baptized. He had once

refused the sacrament to a saintly Lutheran pastor, John Boltzius. But at Norwich in 1759 a different attitude is revealed. Wesley noticed that a considerable number of Dissenters were present at the communion ; he says, ' I desired every one to use that posture he judged best. Had I required them to kneel, probably half would have sat. Now all but one kneeled down.' In Scotland he attended Presbyterian communions, though frankly he did not appreciate them. In 1772 he writes : ' I attended the Church of England service in the morning and that of the Kirk in the afternoon. . . . Truly no man, having drunk old wine, desireth new.'

3. A third and even more significant change in Wesley's sacramentarianism is seen in what perhaps can best be called his ' evangelistic ' use of the Lord's Supper. He invited all sinners seeking salvation to the Table, and insisted that that was the place where they were most likely to find the Saviour. In this he was probably greatly influenced by the experience of his mother, who received the ' assurance of forgiveness ' at the Lord's Table in August 1739. A few months later (June 1740) we find Wesley writing : ' I preached on " Do this in remembrance of Me." In latter times many have affirmed that the Lord's Supper is not a converting but a confirming ordinance. Among us it has been diligently taught that none but those who are truly converted, who are believers in the full sense, ought to communicate. But experience shows the gross falsehood of the assertion that the Lord's Supper is not a converting ordinance. Ye are the witnesses. For many now present know the very beginning of your conversion to God was wrought at the Lord's Supper. . . .'

This strong conviction of the ' evangelistic ' purpose of the Lord's Supper finds expression in some of the sacramental hymns :

Come to the Supper, come,
Sinners, there still is room ;
Every soul may be His guest,
Jesus gives the general word ;
Share the monumental feast,
Eat the Supper of your Lord.

Lord, I have now invited all,
And instant still the guests shall call,
Still shall I all invite to Thee ;
For, O my God, it seems but right
In mine, Thy meanest servant's sight,
That where ALL is, there all should be.

The Wesleys invited to the Lord's Table as many as they invited to the Lord, and on the same conditions.

4. This brings us to the greatest and most far-reaching change which Wesley's conversion made to his sacramentarianism. In the sermon from which we have just quoted we read : 'But God is above all means . . . have a care, therefore, of limiting the Almighty. . . . He can convey His grace, either in or out of the means which He hath appointed. The ordinance in itself, the *opus operatum*, the mere work done, profiteth nothing. . . . Even what God ordains conveys no grace to the soul if you trust not in Him alone.' This difference meant everything to Wesley, as it means to us.

It is hard to express in words, more easily felt than described, and Wesley says little about it. But he and his brother have left a record of that great change, in verses which bear the date of 1740, and which deserve careful study by all students of Christian experience.

This is how Wesley describes his sacramentarianism before his conversion :

Oft did I with the assembly join,
And near Thine altar drew ;
A form of godliness was mine,
The power I never knew.

I rested in the outward law,
  Nor knew its deep design ;
The length and breadth I never saw,
  And height of Love Divine.

To please Thee thus, at length I see,
  Vainly I hoped and strove ;
For what are outward things to Thee
  Unless they spring from Love ?

But I of means have made my boast,
  Of means an idol made,
The spirit in the letter lost,
  The substance in the shade.

And this is how Wesley describes the change. Nothing is altered outwardly ; he is at the same service, in the same place, but inwardly there is a new creation :

Still for Thy loving kindness, Lord,
  I in Thy temple wait ;
I look to find Thee in Thy Word,
  Or at Thy Table meet.

Here, in Thine own appointed ways,
  I wait to learn Thy will ;
Silent, I stand before Thy face,
  And hear Thee say, ' Be still.'

I wait my vigour to renew,
  Thine image to retrieve.
The veil of outward things pass through,
  And gasp in Thee to live.

For Wesley, at the Holy Table, nothing was altered, but all things had become new.

THOMAS H. BARRATT.

HYMN :

O LOVE divine ! what hast Thou done ?
The immortal God hath died for me !
The Father's co-eternal Son
Bore all my sins upon the tree ;
The immortal God for me hath died !
My Lord, my Love is crucified.

Behold Him, all ye that pass by,
The bleeding Prince of Life and Peace
Come, sinners, see your Maker die,
And say, was ever grief like His ?
Come, feel with me His blood applied:
My Lord, my Love is crucified :—

Is crucified for me and you,
To bring us rebels back to God :
Believe, believe the record true,
Ye all are bought with Jesu's blood,
Pardon for all flows from His side ;
My Lord, my Love is crucified.

Then let us sit beneath His cross,
And gladly catch the healing stream,
All things for Him account but loss,
And give up all our hearts to Him ;
Of nothing think or speak beside,
My Lord, my Love is crucified !

II

SACRAMENTAL GRACE AND EVANGELICAL EXPERIENCE

We cannot help thinking antithetically, but we do well to avoid 'false antitheses' when we can, although an ironical man might argue very plausibly that theological controversy has been largely composed of them. When a false antithesis becomes a popular slogan it is difficult to arrest its malignant influence—and no better illustration can be found than the oft-repeated catchwords: Altar or pulpit—Sacrament or Gospel. Over-emphasis may be given to a truth, and over-protest against that over-emphasis may perhaps be condoned; but truths and emphases are different things, and, however much certain groups of Christians may have unduly stressed the Sacraments, it is entirely objectionable to proclaim the Gospel as if it excluded sacraments. The object of this paper is to show that Methodists are unfaithful to the Gospel they have inherited if they think it excludes the Sacraments. The Methodist Gospel was, from the beginning, individual and social, personal and institutional, evangelical and sacramental, and must remain so. An extract from Wesley's *Journal* of Friday, June 27, 1740, shows clearly that there is no contradiction between sacramental grace and evangelical experience. He preached, he tells us, that the Lord's Supper was not only 'a confirming ordinance,' but even a means of converting grace—and appealed to the evangelical experience of those to whom he was preaching to confirm his claim. 'Ye are the witnesses,' he writes.

'For many now present know, the very beginning of your conversion to God (perhaps, in some, the first deep conviction) was wrought at the Lord's Supper. Now, one simple instance of this kind overthrows the whole (contrary) assertion.' On the next day, June 28, he says: 'I showed at large that the Lord's Supper was ordained by God to be a means of conveying to men either preventing, or justifying, or sanctifying grace, according to their several necessities.' So at the very commencement of the Evangelical Revival, when the fires of evangelical experience were burning most brightly, the evangelical character of the Eucharist was emphasized by the Great Evangelist. This emphasis was never absent from the Wesleys' teaching, as is shown by the republication of John's sermon on 'Constant Communion' in 1788, and by the widespread popularity of the 166 hymns which John and Charles Wesley published conjointly on the subject.

The distinguishing mark of Methodism as a religion of immediate evangelical experience of God, in contrast with other Protestant movements, was its insistence upon collective and institutional religion. No one believed more devoutly than John Wesley in salvation by faith, but he was conscious of the limitations of the human mind, and dreaded the individualistic extravagances of certain types of mysticism. However much he stressed the direct relationship of the individual soul to its Maker, he realized that individuals were social beings, and indeed only came to real individual consciousness as social beings in community. Hence he stressed human fellowship and human societies, and found no contradiction between the religious life of the society and of the individual, but saw that one was necessarily complemented by the other, and both were sacred. The Lord's Supper was the historical social means of grace—the symbol of the society's communion with its Lord as well as of the

communion of the Lord with its individual members. The Presence promised to the two or three meeting together in the Name was best assured when men ate and drank together, as Jesus told them to do. They believed that when they ate that bread and drank that cup, their Master, though invisible, would be really present in their midst, honouring their faith and obedience. The evangelical experience in its most fervent days was repeatedly fed by sacramental grace. It is no exaggeration to say that one of the most conspicuous features of the Evangelical Revival was the revival of sacramental worship, and the depth and strength of that wonderful movement is imperfectly apprehended by those who do not understand that the evangelical experience was enriched by sacramental grace. If further evidence were necessary to show that the antithesis of Sacrament and Gospel is untrue, it is afforded by the fact that the greatest modern evangelist of Methodism, Hugh Price Hughes, was perhaps the highest sacramentalist.

How, then, does it come to pass that the slogan, Sacrament or Gospel, is not unheard in Methodist circles? The answer, no doubt, is largely to be found in historical happenings. The Roman and Anglo-Catholic over-emphasis of sacramental religion has caused a reaction among Free Churchmen. The elaboration of ritual which they neither understand nor want to; the insistence on Sacraments not only as a means of salvation, but in practice as the only means, has made men turn to a simpler gospel; and the fear of Rome—widespread and not altogether unjustifiable—has undoubtedly influenced the minds of Methodists. Furthermore, the belief in the simplicity of the Gospel has made them wonder whether even the mild sacramental ritual of Methodism is necessary, and in some few cases—probably increasing in number—the emphasis of the blood of Christ has become uncongenial,

because their inspirations arise from the teachings and character of Jesus, and they are unconsciously infected with a spirit antipathetic both to sacramentalism and evangelicalism. Now every one realizes that the Reformation, in its protest for direct personal access to God, delivered us from many burdens. The elaborated ritualism and sacerdotalism of Catholicism unquestionably veil the simplicity of the Gospel, and there are elements in the exaggerated sacramental system so rapidly developing in England which not only overlie the simplicity of the Gospel, but mislead the souls of men. Against such things the evangelical witness must make itself felt. But it must not be forgotten that no system gains wide popularity unless it meets some genuine human need—and mere assertion that the Sacraments are unnecessary, and all that is wanted is the simple Gospel, will not influence the people who receive help from them, nor satisfy those who realize that the Church, if it is to endure as a society, needs symbolic expressions of its life.

The most fruitless way of avoiding a ditch on one side of the road is to fall in the ditch on the other. And what is needed against extravagant ceremonial sacramentarianism is not to say, 'Sacraments don't matter, let us have the simple Gospel,' but to find out what is essential in the Sacraments as an expression of that simple Gospel.

There are three things of the utmost importance. The first is that the Gospel of Christ is not only immediate, but mediate. Salvation by faith is not necessarily salvation, as Wesley pointed out, apart from the means of grace. The direct faith of the centurion was commended by Jesus, and so was the indirect faith of the woman with the issue of blood. One said, 'Speak the word only'—the other did not even need a word. 'If I may but touch the hem of His garment,' she said—and Christ's garments became to her a means

of grace ; glistened like the whitened robes of the Transfiguration long before the Transfiguration took place ; were sacramental vestments ; the means by which her faith expressed itself. If she had thought touching the garment essential to salvation she would have been wrong, but she did not—it was a means of grace. So Charles Wesley wrote :

> His body doth the cure dispense,
> *His garment is the ordinance*
> In which He deigns to appear ;
> The word, the prayer, the broken bread,
> Virtue from Him doth best proceed,
> And I shall find Him there.

And so the Sacrament explains the fact that Christ comes to His own through material media as well as apart from them. And this matters. Most of our life is lived amongst things we see and touch, but we do not need to get away from them to get to God. The Sacrament teaches us that a bit of common bread can be the medium of the divine manifestation, and, if so, what earthly thing cannot be the medium of this revelation, what cannot be a means of grace?

> Earth is crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush aflame with God.

Why should we, because men say in practice there is no *other* way of reaching God except by Sacraments, decline to see their value, and not say, this is one way, but there are others?

The next thing is to remember that not only is the Sacrament a means—a medium—of individual grace, but that it is an important social symbol. Christianity is a social religion. While it stresses direct individual access of the child to his Father, it never forgets that God is the Father of a family of which each child is a

member. The stress of family relations is vital to true Christianity. The Lord's Supper is a meal in which He is always the invisible host. It may be said that His presence is assured to His people whenever they gather in His Name, and that is quite true; but this gathering has a special significance—both in Scripture and history—and its form a symbolic value which no other Christian gathering has. Human societies may be thinkable without symbols, but wherever they exist the symbols are there—and the wine that tells of a love that bled for us and bread of what sustains our spiritual life, are symbols so simple and moving that we may well wonder what could be substituted for them. The few Christian societies that do without them invent symbols of their own, which serve to emphasize their severance from other Christians. The bread and wine emphasize the deep unity of all who love the Saviour; they are the mark of the Church of God, not of a sect; they are the symbols of our common salvation; they are the flag of the Christian Kingdom; they are the food of the Church, invisible and visible. Along with the water of baptism, they remain the only *common* outward symbols of the Church of God.

But the most important fact of all is that the Lord's Supper is the preacher of the Gospel: 'Ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come.' What can be more profoundly evangelical? The Gospel which Paul preached, and Luther and Wesley, was the Lord's death—and evangelicalism will have lost its meaning if it does not say, 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel—the power of God to salvation.'

This Sacrament has not failed, even in its debased forms, to preach the Lord's death. Even the Mass does that, and, by doing it, works its chief service to the world. 'What then?—only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed;

and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.' Better the Mass proclaiming the Lord's death till He come than a pulpit which throws doubt upon its efficacy! The Lord's Supper commemorates a sacrifice. It speaks of one oblation once offered, it invokes the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world to have mercy on us. It commemorates not a supper, but the Cross of our redemption, of which the supper was made into a symbol. It proclaims the Lord's death!

I once asked a simple Roman Catholic Irishman why he worshipped at Mass, and told him my difficulties of worship there, on account of the doctrine of transubstantiation and all the elaborate ritual. 'Ah,' he said, 'I don't bother about these things.' 'Well, how can you help it?' I replied. 'Well,' he said, 'I have something better to think of. I think about the Saviour dying for me—about His arrest, judgement, sad walk in the way of sorrow, and His hanging on the cross, and saying for me, for *me*, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"—and that, you know, sir, brings you very near to Jesus, and Jesus very near to you.' Even when overlaid with ceremonial, the sacrament does 'show forth the Lord's death.'

And this silent witness to the death of Christ in thousands of churches is especially necessary when the pulpit forgets the Lord's atoning death. The human witness may fail; has often failed; but as long as the Lord's Supper is celebrated men will know that

> Jesu's blood, through earth and skies,
> Mercy, free, boundless mercy! cries.

But it is also evangelical in its assertion of the Presence—the real Presence. I know there are people who say it is a mere memorial, who treat it with less

reverence than a devout soul would give to a crucifix, and argue that it declares the real absence of Jesus. No wonder such unbelief finds the Sacrament a mere ritual! But to Methodists it has always declared a Presence:

> We need not now go up to heaven,
> To bring the long-sought Saviour down;
> Thou art to all already given,
> Thou dost even now Thy banquet crown:
> To every faithful soul appear,
> And show Thy real presence here.

The fact, not the mode, of the Presence is what matters. And, while we cannot accept the mode which Roman Catholics assert, we can affirm the fact. No better reasoned account of the reality of the fact has been written than that by Dr. Ryder Smith, in his Fernley Lecture. But to many of us experience, evangelical experience, is even more convincing. It is no wonder to us that Charles Wesley could write of his mother's conversion at the Sacrament—

> The Father then revealed the Son,
> Him in the broken bread made known.

I bear my humble testimony, as a Methodist should, that Christ is really present at the Sacrament, because I have met Him there.

And what does evangelical religion mean if it does not mean, Christ died for my sins, and He is with us always until the end of the world?

There is no instrument of evangelicalism more important when all Christian history is reviewed, not even the pulpit, than the Lord's Supper, and our witness to its evangelical value must be our reply to sacerdotal abuses; for sacramental grace and evangelical experience are one—and both mean that Christ is all in all.

J. Ernest Rattenbury.

HYMN :

WHEN I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my God :
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down :
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown ?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small ;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

III

THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO CHILDHOOD

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THE TRAINING OF CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH WITHIN THE CHURCH 95

H. Vincent Capsey
United Methodist Church

Our usage in regard to the Sacrament of Baptism raises a practical problem of vital concern to the future of our Church, in relation to those born and nurtured within our borders. How can the faith confessed at baptism be made living and personal, and our children in the faith be brought to Christian discipleship, and to loving fellowship and loyal service in the Church of their fathers. It is a difficult and delicate problem. If we fail here, we fail in the most tenderly human and most distinctively Christlike aspects of our responsibility.

LET US HEAR AFRESH THE WORDS OF JESUS :

'Suffer little children'	–	–	–	Mark x. 13–16
'These little ones'	–	–	–	Matt. xviii. 10
'Feed My lambs'	–	–	–	John xxi. 15–16

LET US GIVE thanks for Christ's revelation to us of God the Father's great love for children, of their infinite value in His sight and of their place in the Kingdom of Heaven :

For the yearning compassion of Jesus towards little children, for His indignation against those who would hinder their access to Him, for the winsomeness of His love, drawing them to Himself and exalting them in the high places of His Kingdom,

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

For the beauty of children and their joy in all beautiful things, for their mirth and laughter, and for the light and joy they bring into the world,

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

For their enthusiasm, their abounding energy and their love of the heroic and adventurous, for their candour and generous trust and for their sense of the nearness of spiritual realities,

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

For the childhood of Jesus our Lord, for His birth and helpless babyhood, for His Mother's gentle care and nurture, and for all unknown souls who nursed and tended Him,

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

For His joyful, eager, natural yet obedient boyhood, uplifting childhood into the Godhead, for the love of God by which we know He took to Himself the form of a child and gave us the joy of knowing God as Father,

Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

I

THE TRAINING OF CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH WITHIN THE CHURCH

I CAN find no better way of commencing my address than to quote a sentence from the 'Notes on Congress Subjects.' It is as follows: 'Our usage in regard to the Sacrament of Baptism raises a practical problem of vital concern to the future of our Church in relation to those born and nurtured within our borders.'

It is our usage to baptize infants. By what is our usage determined? Let us, in justice to ourselves, affirm that it is by reason of a conception of the meaning and significance of baptism which we firmly hold and strongly cherish. It is something quite other than a piece of religious humbug, and something more than a merely formal gesture. Without attempting a complete account of it, we may assert this much:

(1) That it is a symbolic rite signifying admission into the Church.

(2) It is of the nature of a covenant, whereby assurance is given of the privileges of Christian instruction and shepherding and spiritual tendance.

Of these, the first involves a certain mental attitude, and the second a definite responsibility, an obligation accepted in the name of Christ.

I

How do we regard the baptized child? Is he in the Church? If so, I suggest that we should think of him in that way, and to such purpose that the child cannot help but become aware of our thought, and, in

consequence, grows quite naturally to regard himself in that light.

Let us urge the view that the Sunday school is an integral part of the Church, and 'reckon the children as already in the Church, rather than as potential members for future years.' Let us order our speech and determine our arrangements accordingly. We talk of Church and school. Is it a phrase really indicative of our attitude of mind, and in keeping with an unfortunate lack of vital unity and identity of interest, or only an unhappy form of speech? We should do well to find a better, and certainly we must strive to ensure, not only the closest possible co-operation in all forms of Church activity, but a real sense of corporate responsibility, and oneness of spirit and aim. 'The school is the Church engaged in tending her young. It must be the Church that cares for the child from the very beginning, if later on she is to rejoice in his fidelity and love.'

By the usage of baptism she has accepted this responsibility. Her baptismal roll is not a thing to be forgotten. Let the 'Cradle Roll' be an effective reminder; and, when children and young people come to be registered, in her school, reserve a column in which to put the date of baptism. Make this the opportunity of a reminder to all concerned—parents, teachers, scholars—of what baptism means. Give them to realize that by the agency of her school the Church seeks to fulfil her covenant promise in the name of Christ—a promise in which the parents shared—and rejoices in the personal presence of those who in that sacred rite were welcomed into her fold and family.

II

Let me pass on to consider our responsibility to the girls and boys we have. They are to be 'nurtured

within our borders '—to take the phrase of the Congress 'Notes.'

We have got to do our very best for them in the name of Him whose word comes to us both with challenge and inspiration: 'Inasmuch as ye do it unto one of the least of these ye do it to Me.' He says to the Church, as He said to Peter, 'Lovest thou Me? Lovest thou Me *more* . . . ? Feed My lambs.'

It is the first part of our obligation to love them; to love them for their own sakes, with a supreme desire for their highest well-being—not just a sentimental regard or patronizing solicitude, but a love that gives its best and does its utmost, a love that takes pains, an understanding love that puts itself to school that it may learn how to help, that is big enough to sit at the feet of the child that it may find out how to lead him into fullness of life; 'to love them with a zeal like His.' We never do this more completely than when we do it for His sake.

Now note: 'Lovest thou Me *more* . . . ? Feed My lambs.' How very practical is the outworking of love. He might have said, '*Love* My lambs.' He said, '*Feed* My lambs.' Nourish them, provide for them. Give them food. Select it with care. Suitable food. The right sort of food for lambs; or, appreciating the figure but speaking in other terms, let us say, 'Nurture must be according to nature.' Appreciate the child's nature that you may minister to the child's needs.

'Feed *My* lambs,' He says. We must remember that they belong to Him. Let the thought cleanse our ministry of all that is second-rate. Remember, too, that they are His in that essential right and heritage which makes it imperative for us to lead them to *know* they are His, and to mediate Jesus to them in that spiritual reality that sets His seal upon them and puts His name upon their lives. To bring them to conscious and personal acceptance of Him, and personal

experience of His love and grace—this, surely, is our obligation and our cherished aim.

How shall we do this?

1. *Teach them about Him.* This, of course, we must do. We must unfold to them the gospel story of His life and death and life (of Him that 'liveth and was dead and is alive for evermore'). I speak baldly; I use no adjectives. Of set purpose I speak so. For if we unfold that story in a way that makes it live, and makes Jesus real, they will supply the adjectives themselves, only to find, however, that they are all inadequate and that He has beggared language; and where one of old, yearning towards the future and a coming Saviour, said, 'His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace,' our girls and boys will feel that, after all, it is so much easier for them to say 'Jesus' and yet mean as much, and more.

But it would be a mistake to think that, in our desire to teach them about Jesus, we must limit ourselves in our lesson-material to that which has specific and immediate reference to Him or to that which is contained within the Gospels, or in the New Testament, or in the whole library of Bible literature. For Jesus gathers into Himself all that is of supremest worth—grace and beauty, chivalry and honour, purity and truth, strength and goodness—so that wherein by any means we help our girls and boys to appreciate and approve these things we shall be helping them to move out in ready response to Him who is of them all the perfect example and embodiment. To help a child to discern the beauty of a flower will do something to prepare him to love the altogether lovely. So to set before a boy the thing of chivalry and courage that he kindles to it with enthusiasm will do something to make him ready of response to Him who was of all the most chivalrous and the most courageous.

We shall remember that, while Jesus appeals to children of all ages and stages of development, there are elements in the sum total of all that He was and is which have peculiar and special appeal at *certain* stages. We must know the fitting season. The Jesus of the thorn-crowned brow and the blood-stained cheek is not the Jesus to press upon the attention of the little child. The gentle Jesus, meek and mild, is hardly the most likely to capture the imagination and grip the heart of the vigorous boy, full of appreciation of heroic daring and dauntless fear. But was there ever one more heroic, more daring, than Jesus, or one so altogether fearless? Show him that Jesus—the Jesus who makes bullies tremble and hard-hearted men slink away abashed and condemned when He turns on them His searching look. Surely that Jesus moves through the pages of the New Testament. Make sure they see Him, and see Him most vividly, then they will rejoice in Him with a pecular joy.

2. *Surround them with the Things that are after His Spirit.* I need hardly remind you that religion is 'more caught than taught.' We absorb so much from our environment. This is particularly true of children. They are sensitive to suggestion and atmosphere. Formal teaching may be more than discounted, it may be negatived, by a sense of something different and contrary which gains readier access to the inmost heart.

I have, on occasion—very rare occasion, I sincerely hope—found myself earnestly commending the love of God to a congregation, and shaking my fist in their faces to drive it in. Some of us have perhaps spoken to children and young people of Jesus as He wrought in the carpenter's shop. We have told them of the manner of His work—how thorough and painstaking; of the perfect fit of the yokes He made. We have so discoursed to boys and girls as they sat on hard,

uncomfortable forms, cheaply made, creaky, and broken, which followers of Jesus have provided for them. Ugliness, dirtiness, shabbiness, untidiness, the things which are slipshod, disorderly, and second-rate, are creating an impression, a most undesirable impression. These things are not of the Spirit of Christ.

The material elements in the environment have their influence, but beyond these things, and of a still greater consequence, are those of moral and spiritual quality, things of courtesy and consideration—the exercise of a genuine friendliness which singles out the individual and never loses him in the crowd, the friendliness that makes one feel that he counts, and that radiates a warmth and glow in which the heart becomes readily receptive of the message of love. This must take very practical form, its provisions and arrangements not grudgingly made, but gladly, and with a thoughtfulness begotten of a genuine understanding of the specific needs and particular interests of the children and young people.

It may be a very friendly thing to give a boy a Bible, it may conceivably be yet more friendly to help to provide him with a playing-field or (where it applies) to lend a hand in getting him a job. This is not to depreciate the Bible by a comparison, but to honour it by carrying out its teaching.

3. *Give them Something to Do.* Week after week, for year after year, we have let loose upon our girls and boys a veritable flood of talk, a lot of it far removed from the thought-world in which they really moved. I think, on the whole, they have stood it very well, and, by the mercy of God, have in some instances learnt something from it. But in increasing numbers we are coming—slowly perhaps, but surely—to see that the best way of learning is by doing. Regard to this—'learning by doing'—must help to determine our arrangements for the religious education and spiritual

development of our young people. 'They also serve who only stand and wait.' This is a valuable and comforting truth, no doubt, but not intended for young people. Quite good for some older folk, and especially so if by 'standing' we meant 'standing by' the prentice hand who is being given a chance to do a job. That man would lay us under a tremendous debt who would show us how to create an order of Church life and activity in which, to a far greater degree than has ever yet obtained, our young people should have opportunity to *do* something—something worth while, yet appropriate to their years and powers, ranging from the simplest forms of service of which a child is capable to those in which the finest gifts of spiritual leadership are essential. Many suggestions have already been made—not all of them upon the immediate initiative of the Church, nor used by her to full advantage, but offering a considerable measure of practical value. The Grading Movement in the Sunday school is doing much in this direction, and the extension of week-day activities is making a big contribution.

Any youth organization worth while must build the principle of service into the very centre of its fabric. Symbols, badges, mottoes, slogans, printed aims in gripping phrases—these are good, and have a value; but, above all, we must see that the practical plan, the actual exercises, the things actually and regularly done, are vitally in relation to the avowed principle and lead to the desired end.

Be assured that any such enterprise will take time and thought and devotion, with a good deal of patience and perseverance and prayer, to say nothing of an unfailing stock of cheerfulness. There are no easy ways and no short cuts. But, whatever the demand, it can be met for Christ's sake.

4. *We must Mediate Jesus to them.* I reserve this for

my closing word, though in a very real sense it is a carrying forward of the idea of ' surrounding them with the things of His Spirit ' ; for personality is a vital factor in environment. It matters greatly what sort of people you have about you.

I remember the word of Jesus, ' He that receiveth you receiveth Me.' He spoke of the men who had kept company with Him, who had discovered His outlook, appreciated His value, caught something of His Spirit, and learnt who He was. To receive them was to receive Him. He was mediated in spiritual reality.

We must know Him. He must be vital in our experience, directive in our life, pervasive in our character, and ever energizing in our fellowship. He is the eternal secret of success—' He that hath the Son hath life.' It is ' life, more life, and fuller, that we want ' ; but life in a body, life in an active organism, penetrating to every extremity, pouring through every vein, throbbing in every nerve ; using many elements to sustain itself, some to use and then to throw away, some to use and make permanent in personality.

This life can be mediated. It comes to us in intensified measure as we seek to impart it to others. For He who saith, ' He that receiveth you receiveth Me,' saith also, ' He that receiveth one such little child in My name receiveth Me.'

H. Vincent Capsey.

DIRECTED SILENCE :

Let us pray for parents and teachers, for those who write the books that children love to read, and paint the pictures they love to see, and for all who are ministers of grace to their inner life.

That all such may be so inspired by the love of Jesus and taught by His Spirit, that with meekness of wisdom and persuasive authority they may present the grace of the gospel to mind and heart and conscience, and win the children to decisive surrender to Christ and to glad and loyal fellowship with His Church.

Let us pray that in all our contact with children we may be ruled in our own habit and conduct by reverence for purity, by simplicity, by wise and understanding sympathy, that patiently we may foster in them the love of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, and lead them into the joys of chivalrous and sacrificial service for one another.

Let us by our own obedience to the Spirit of Jesus inspire the children with awareness of the unchanging presence of Christ in the common ways of daily life and duty, that they may recognize our standard as His standard, His cause as our cause, Himself as our Captain, Hero, and King.

Let us in particular remember before God, their Father and ours, all children who are led astray by sinful inclination, by perversity of will and by evil example, ' who for one morsel of meat have sold their birthright,' that they may return to the fold of the Good Shepherd, and by the grace of His holy Spirit, through repentance and faith, become true disciples of Jesus, and loyal servants in the fellowship of His Kingdom.

Let us also remember before God our Father and the Father of the spirits of all flesh, all children born with defect of body or mind, all children whose wilfulness is a temptation, and who stand in constant peril of sin, all orphaned, homeless, or unwanted children, and all children of loveless homes.

Chiefly let us at this time recollect our Lord's purpose for children as the measure of the responsibility of His Church for their Christian nurture and gracious discipline, and consecrate ourselves without reserve to their service ; ' for it is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.'

HYMN :

SHINE Thou upon us, Lord,
True Light of men, to-day ;
And through the written word
Thy very self display ;
That so, from hearts which burn
With gazing on Thy face,
The little ones may learn
The wonders of Thy grace.

Breathe Thou upon us, Lord,
Thy Spirit's living flame,
That so with one accord
Our lips may tell Thy name ;
Give Thou the hearing ear,
Fix Thou the wandering thought,
That those we teach may hear
The great things Thou hast wrought.

Speak Thou for us, O Lord,
In all we say of Thee ;
According to Thy word
Let all our teaching be ;
That so Thy lambs may know
Their own true Shepherd's voice,
Where'er He leads them go,
And in His love rejoice.

Live Thou within us, Lord ;
Thy mind and will be ours ;
Be Thou beloved, adored,
And served, with all our powers ;
That so our lives may teach
Thy children what Thou art,
And plead, by more than speech,
For Thee with every heart.

BENEDICTION.

IV

THE CALL OF YOUTH

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The problems of adolescence were probably never better understood than now, and never more difficult to handle. A new insight has enabled us to read the mind of youth with greater sympathy, and to discern the mental unrest occasioned by a rapid physical development and the awakening of romance, and by the heightened self-consciousness which these induce. Adolescence is often a period of acute spiritual loneliness, which takes refuge from itself in the gang and the team, or drives the spirit forth to find congenial fellowship, even with companions who are older and of different sex than themselves. Withal it is a period in which occur delicate and decisive movements of the Holy Spirit, including a sensitive awareness of sin. These are moods of the soul when youth may be kindled into flame by a glowing idealism, and be moved to the dedication of itself to great and adventurous living.

For these reasons it is a period of life which calls imperatively to the Christian teacher and leader. Will the youth of to-day, with his sterling qualities of independence, love of untrammelled freedom and adventurousness, be deaf to the appeal of Christ and His Cross? Our responsibility is so to present the call that 'pathways of adventure'—in learning, service, and sacrifice may open to their eyes, that they may see how the flame of passion may be exalted into pure and holy love, and that, above all, the service of Christ may be discerned to be the noblest of heroisms—'He loved me and gave Himself up for me.'

HYMN :

WHEN morning gilds the skies,
My heart awakening cries,
  May Jesus Christ be praised !
Alike at work and prayer
To Jesus I repair :
  May Jesus Christ be praised !

When sleep her balm denies,
My silent spirit sighs,
  May Jesus Christ be praised !
When evil thoughts molest,
With this I shield my breast,—
  May Jesus Christ be praised !

Does sadness fill my mind ?
A solace here I find,—
  May Jesus Christ be praised !
Or fades my earthly bliss ?
My comfort still is this,—
  May Jesus Christ be praised !

To God, the Word, on high
The hosts of angels cry,
  May Jesus Christ be praised !
Let mortals, too, upraise
Their voice in hymns of praise :
  May Jesus Christ be praised !

Let earth's wide circle round
In joyful notes resound,
  May Jesus Christ be praised !
Let air, and sea, and sky,
From depth to height, reply,
  May Jesus Christ be praised !

PRAYER :

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy name through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE COMMANDMENTS OF JESUS :

(*All standing.*)

Minister :

Jesus said : The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord : and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment.

People :

Lord have mercy upon us and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Minister :

And the second is like unto it, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

People :

Lord, have mercy upon us and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Minister :

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

People :

Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all this Thy law in our hearts, we beseech Thee.

LET US PRAY :

O Almighty and most merciful God, of Thy bountiful goodness keep us, we beseech Thee, from all things that may hurt us, that we, being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things Thou wouldest have done : through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

HYMN :

SING we the King who is coming to reign ;
Glory to Jesus, the Lamb that was slain ;
Life and salvation His empire shall bring,
Joy to the nations, when Jesus is King.

Come, let us sing praise to our King,
Jesus our King, Jesus our King :
This is our song, who to Jesus belong,—
Glory to Jesus, to Jesus our King !

All men shall dwell in His marvellous light,
Races long severed His love shall unite,
Justice and truth from His sceptre shall spring,
Wrong shall be ended, when Jesus is King.

All shall be well in His kingdom of peace,
Freedom shall flourish and wisdom increase,
Foe shall be friend when His triumph we sing,
Sword shall be sickle, when Jesus is King.

Souls shall be saved from the burden of sin,
Doubt shall not darken His witness within,
Hell hath no terrors and death hath no sting,
Love is victorious, when Jesus is King.

Kingdom of Christ, for thy coming we pray ;
Hasten, O Father, the dawn of the day
When this new song Thy creation shall sing,—
Satan is vanquished, and Jesus is King !

I

THE CHURCH'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE CALL OF YOUTH

It is not quite clear to me whether this means 'Youth Calling' or 'Calling to Youth,' but in either case it suggests the 'Problem of Youth,' the biggest problem the united Church will have to face, and the subject of my few remarks this evening.

It is a fact that the youth of to-day has little use for a life of devotion and worship, but it is also true that he has a veritable passion for service. Now, this does not worry me very much—in fact, I think it is a good sign. Psychologists point out to us that all through history one can trace a period of 'expression' following a period of 'introspection.' It is clearly so in the life of the Church. I think I should be right in saying that Christ came at such a time. Perhaps the psychologists are right, perhaps this passion for service is God's way of taking a step forward. Our job, plainly, is to control this passion for service so as to make the best possible use of it, and to try to lead youth at the same time to a life of devotion for our Lord.

So the problem before us is, 'How to present Christianity to the youth of to-day,' so that he will not only accept it, but that he will *be keen on it*, and follow it with all that vigour and energy that makes youth so lovable and fascinating.

Some people regard the youth of to-day as a perfectly hopeless case; personally I regard him most hopefully. What worries me are the influences surrounding him for which he is in no way responsible, but which

make sane views and sound principles extremely difficult for him.

We must to-day concentrate only on the religious influences surrounding the youth; this is quite a big enough problem, and one which it is our job to solve.

First of all, it would be well to consider the amazing lack of religious influences so far as contact with organized religion is concerned. We are told on very good authority that ninety-two per cent. of the male youth of this Christian country do not come under the direct influence of organized religion.

We have wonderfully efficient organizations and institutions in the Sunday School, Boys' Brigades, Scouts, Girl Guides, Life Brigades, &c. The influence of all this work is magnificent, and I do not wish to criticize any of them. My criticism starts at the time when these youngsters are forced for obvious reasons to leave these organizations. It is not the fault of the leaders of these organizations that the youngsters do not pass into the family life of the Churches. They have trained them on broad lines, but the compass of the Church organization is too narrow to receive them. Happily there are rare cases where the family of the Church is fully alive to its duties and its opportunities.

Now, there is something wrong with our Church life if a youngster, on reaching the age when he can and will understand and see through things for himself, no longer holds to the Church.

We have got to find out *why*.

It is no use blaming the youngster and saying 'the modern youth is impossible.' The truth is, we fail to draw him. *Why?*

Can it be lack of interest in him?
Is it that we don't understand him?
Do we expect him to swallow all that we tell him

without giving him a chance to ask the why and wherefore?

Do we realize that the youth has very real problems and that we never give him a fair chance of putting them before us, so that we can seriously get down and settle them with him—not *for* him but *with* him?

I suggest that our Church life is to be found guilty on all these counts, and only on rare occasions do you find it to the contrary, and then through the love of a big-hearted minister or layman who loves youth. Generally speaking, the family of the Church ignores the youth around it unless the youth conforms naturally, or unnaturally, to the organizations of the Church.

Generally speaking, the Church life does not attract youth, and I am afraid it is because Church life is not *real* enough to attract him. Ask yourself, is Christianity *fairly* represented by our Church life? I am quite certain that REAL Christianity will always attract youth. If we hope to make our religion attractive our religion has got to be our *life*. It is useless to try and make youth think that going to Church, attending class meetings or prayer meetings or any other meetings is religion. This is the religion of a good many, but it is *not Christianity*.

Dr. Hulme has asked me here especially to speak about the Regnal League, but I should hesitate to do so were it not that I believe it has the solution to the problem. I am afraid that I could not properly tell you what the Regnal League is if I spoke all day. It is something which is felt, which gets into your whole being and affects your whole life. It is a spiritual force, and cannot be measured or explained in words. Let me say this, however:

All that I have been saying about the approach to youth and the interest in his problems, all that I said

about religion being *life* itself, is found in Regnalism. We deal with life all the time. We say :

> Life is the gift of God.
>
> All life comes from Him and belongs to Him.
>
> Life is a great gift, and is to be used for the highest ends, developed to the fullest.
>
> We believe in the all-round life in which a man develops all sides of his nature—*physical*, *mental*, and *spiritual*.
>
> Worship is essential to a Regnalite. He believes in God—then obviously he must worship God. You can't *believe* in a God and not worship Him.

Now, a young fellow who is at all anxious to live a decent sort of life—and most of them do at the age of sixteen or eighteen—will be quite ready to accept all this ; to him it is sound common sense and quite understandable.

I can hear some of you saying, ' That may be quite a good thing, but it is not Christianity.

' Where does Christ come in ? What about forgiveness of sins ? What about the Cross ? &c., &c.'

Quite right—but we have been considering a method of approach that will attract youth.

The Regnal creed goes very much deeper ; that is only the start, the manner in which the young fellow is attracted to the Outer Circle. We find that the natural result of a young fellow setting out to develop his life, on the principles which we lay down, is that he eventually comes face to face with Christ ; for he finds that, as his spiritual nature develops, in harmony with his mental and physical sides, it becomes more and more restless, and he welcomes a fellowship which will satisfy his craving for deeper things. He finds that fellowship when he is privileged to pass into the Inner Circle.

I have never known a fellowship so sweet, so intensely real, as we enjoy in our Inner Circles; it must be a similar experience to that enjoyed by the early Methodists.

One lovable young Regnalite expressed the atmosphere of Regnalism in a sentence when he said, 'I joined the Outer Circle, and found the hands of thirty comrades extended to welcome me; when I entered the upper room for my initiation into the Inner Circle, I found the hand of Jesus stretched out to receive me. I took hold of it, and I found a happiness I had never known before.'

Some people think we are inclined to be Modernists and have no use for conversion. We do believe in conversion, but we are sometimes dubious about emotional conversions. Head and heart must work, we believe, in perfect harmony. This young fellow was soundly converted on entering that upper room, and most fellows who join the Inner Circle have the same experience sooner or later.

This is very briefly the sort of work the Regnal League is doing up and down the country, and in many parts abroad.

I should like to make it clear in closing that the Regnal League works with the Church and for the Church of *any* Christian denomination. We are out to strengthen the Church, and we believe we have the appeal and the spirit to do so.

H. J. Holloway.

II

PATHWAYS OF ADVENTURE

The spirit of adventure is in every youth. It was in me. My three great ambitions as a boy were to go down a coal-mine, up in a balloon, and down to the bottom of the sea in a diving-bell. The balloon and the diving-bell were beyond my reach, but I did manage the descent of a coal-mine, and other descents as well. Before I was fourteen I nearly broke my neck tumbling out of a tree in an attempt to rob a rook's nest, and did actually gash my scalp falling down the shaft of a lift which was 'out of bounds.' I crowned the raffish escapades of those early days by running away to go to sea, but my father found me before I could get a ship, and towed me home to suffer the ignominy of being regarded for a season as the 'bad lad' of the village. But I wasn't bad. It was merely the love of adventure finding expression. Since those days I have crossed the Atlantic in a mid-winter gale, I have been in a sand-storm on the desert, I have lived in a gold-mining town—and yet the spirit of adventure in me remains alive. I dream now of flying to India, of crossing beneath the North Sea in a submarine, and of photographing wild beasts in their lairs in an African jungle. Such dreams will probably never be realized, and, if they are, they will certainly leave me unsatisfied, for I have discovered that, however varied or vivid the adventures of youth or middle age may be, there is no permanent satisfaction in any of them. There comes a time when you get shock-proof—when the point of satiety is soon reached, and when much of

the adventuring results in disappointment and disillusionment.

It is because I know how true this is that I want to suggest to the young people who are here to-night a pathway to adventure which will never disappoint, which offers the most glowing of satisfactions instead of disillusionment, and which reserves the biggest thrills for the end. There is such a path, for I have found it and explored it, and, although my exploration is far from being complete yet, I know enough of its riches and of its secrets to commend it to you with all my heart.

Find Me

When God challenges you—as He does in your youth—and says, 'Find Me,' he opens up before your feet a pathway to adventure the thrills of which grow greater with every turn and bend of the road. It is as though He said to you : 'There is a continent here greater than that which Columbus discovered. Its valleys and its hills, its prairies and its rivers, its life and its growths, are dazzlingly rich and incredibly full of promise. Come and explore it. There is an ocean here more spacious than Cortez ever saw. It holds on its bosom islands more blessed than the Pacific embraces. Come and find them. There is a peak here to be climbed reaching up and out into the blue higher than Everest. From its buttes and spurs visions of the future of man can be seen which stir the blood as none else can. Come and climb it. Don't be content to think of me only as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or even as the God of your fathers. Come and find Me for yourself. You will never know who I am, or what I hold, or what I can give to you, until you can say of Me, "My God."'

What will you get out of that? Thrills? Yes, and

in an ascending scale. And, what is better, you will never become shock-proof. But, what is best of all, is that you will achieve a calm, a poise of life, a serenity of spirit infinitely more thrilling than anything which the restless irritations of these turgid days can give. And you will be brought into line with the greatest adventurers of living in all the ages. The men and the women who have revealed and interpreted the deepest emotions and aspirations of the human spirit in art, in music, in literature, and in social service, have been inspired to do their work as a result of their search after Him. Such men and women, in their exploration of the continents and oceans and peaks which are in God, have been the great revealers to man of the range and extent of his own being, and that has been of far greater worth than the discovery of the greatest material feature which the world contains. Go out and find Him ! Take Jesus as your guide and you will tread a path of such thrilling adventure as will enrich you beyond all dreaming, and make you to stand among those who enrich the world.

Find Yourself

The instant result of this response to God's challenge to find Him is the second challenge to find yourself. You may think you know yourself, but you don't until you begin the exploration under the guidance of His Spirit. And one of the most thrilling adventures in living that I know is to find out what you are, what you need, and what you may become. You will discover in the process that there are great stretches within you that need reclamation, and you will set about their recovery as the Dutch set about the reclamation of the Zuyder Zee. You will discover that there are territories infested by plagues, and you will face the task of

draining the swamps and exterminating the mosquitoes as did the scientists on the Isthmus of Panama, who made it so that white men could live and work there and finish the work that de Lesseps had abandoned. You will discover that there are tracts of desert within you, barren and sterile desert, only needing irrigation to make them into gardens rich with produce ; and you will build your dams as did the engineers of the Nile, and make the wilderness blossom as the rose. What the scientist and the engineer have done in the reclamation, cleansing, and irrigation of the pestilent and waste lands, you will see must be done within the realm of your own lives. You will need courage for that—a great high courage. You will need endurance, too, for there will be much bitter fighting. But, if youth is worthy of its name, that is the stuff it likes. And the prize will be an empire within yourself reclaimed, cleansed, and fruitful.

For you will have stemmed the tide of inherited tendency which may have been fouling your blood. You cannot escape being the child of your father, but you will have found that you are more than that. You will have found that you are the child of the ages, and all the wisdom of the centuries is for your aiding. But you will have found something of even greater value than that. You will have found that you are the child of God, and that the power you derive from Him is more than adequate for the reclamation of any Zuyder Zee, or the cleansing of any Panama, or the irrigation of any Sahara in your life. And in that strength you will conquer your environment as you have conquered an evil inherited tendency, and help to change it for others. No other strength is strong enough. The youth who has no such resources as are to be had through finding God stands before the vicious and poisonous temptations of his environment and says, ' I can't help myself' ; but the youth who is strong in the

strength of the Lord says, ' If I don't want it to get me I must change it ' and he goes joyously into the fight. That is what Wesley did. Think of the environment of his generation ! Think of the way in which he pierced its fogs, shattered its shams, and scourged its evils, by his clean, caustic, sanitary speech ! He did not succumb like the weakling. He dared to deny the invincibility of an environment, and in the strength of God to convert it. Can you imagine, even in our day, a greater adventure than that? It is open to the men and women whose lives have been reclaimed, and cleansed, and watered. The very gates of hell cannot prevail against them.

Find Your Sphere

Out of this search after God, leading to the full reclamation of life, there comes the challenge to find your sphere. That is a bigger thing than the attacking of the outstanding evils of the day. You will draw your sword and smite with all your might at drink, and gambling, and vice ; but that is only guerilla warfare. The greatest adventure of all is to set out to change the spirit of the age, and to control it. It is only by doing that that you can hope to rid the age of the devils that tear at its vitals and threaten to bring it to ruin. It is not enough to trust to the new spirit of humanitarianism that is abroad. That is inadequate to the task of severing the octopus-like strangle-hold which a sordid materialism, an almost barbaric atavism, and a spirit of irresponsible frivolity has fastened on our time. A feat of that magnitude calls for men and women who know God for themselves, who have been reclaimed by Him to the full use of their powers, and who, following their Lord and Master Jesus Christ, and inspired by the Holy Ghost, dare to believe that they can change the spirit of the age and

control it. Can it be done? The weakling says it is impossible. The cynic says it isn't worth while. The worldling says it isn't necessary. We say that it can be done, it ought to be done, and it must be done. We say that it will be done if the right kind of adventurers set out to the doing of it. Why, at this very moment, on this very day, there are two men on whom the eyes of the world are focused—the Prime Minister of this country and the President of the United States of America—meeting in conference. About what? The reduction of navies? No! That is a part of their concern, but their main concern is to foster the spirit of peace in all the earth. They are out to change the spirit of the age and to control it. It can be done. It is being done. And God is calling you to find your place in the ranks of those who are doing it.

What an adventure! What a pathway of thrills! And what resources for those who tread it! I heard Dr. Clifford say at a meeting he addressed when he was old and nearly blind that in his life of fighting to change the spirit of his age Jesus had never failed him. 'He has never let me down,' he cried. He will never let you down. Take Him as your Saviour. Go out and find God for yourselves. Start in and reclaim the whole of your life for His service. Find your place in the army of those whose supreme task it is to inspire the age with the love of the best. Your life will throb with the adventure of discovery, and conquest, and control, and when the end of a well-fought day comes you will turn to the dawning that greets you and say, 'The best is yet to be.'

E. McLellan.

Hymn :

Go forth to life, O child of earth,
Still mindful of thy heavenly birth ;
Thou art not here for ease or sin,
But manhood's noble crown to win.

Though passion's fires are in thy soul,
Thou canst through Christ their flames control ;
Though tempters strong beset thy way,
Through Christ thou art more strong than they.

Go on from innocence of youth
To manly pureness, manly truth ;
God's angels still are near to save,
And God Himself doth help the brave.

Then forth to life, O child of earth ;
Be worthy of thy heavenly birth :
For noble service thou art here ;
Thy neighbour help, thy God revere.

III

THE HALLOWING OF ROMANCE

In life we make three beginnings—we are born, we grow up, we die. I am going to talk about growing up: and I believe that the secret of growing up is contained in those other two beginnings—in dying and in being born. Unless we want to be deformed and stunted we must be ready, as Paul says, to die daily and, as Jesus said, to be born again. 'If you want to be full-grown,' He said to a very young man, '*give* all that you have.'

Somewhere in the neighbourhood of twenty-one, people change. We begin to find jobs and responsibilities of our own, to make homes, find mates, and acquire definite ideas about bringing up our parents. Instead of accepting a ready-made world, we begin to create one. The difficulty sometimes arises that, having been lords of creation, we take hardly to the truth that a creator must be the servant of his creation.

But, before discussing that, I want to point out that in adolescence—say between fifteen and twenty-five—we stand 'at the edge of things.' We are spiritually at the seaside. We have journeyed many days from that other shore upon which 'the immortal sea' landed us on our birthday; and we have reached the other shore, the other edge of the island of our childhood. 'Literature,' said Sir Walter Raleigh 'is the record of man's adventures at the edge of things.'

That is why so much of the poetry of the world is a love-song, and so much a requiem. Love and Death—they are the two great adventures at the edge of things.

Biologically they belong together. By the love and death of the individual the species endures. Have you read or seen *Back to Methuselah*?

> ' " Death," said the Snake to Eve, " is not an unhappy thing, if you know how to conquer it."
> ' " How can you conquer it? "
> ' " By another thing called birth."
> ' " What is birth? "
> ' " The Serpent never dies. Some day you will see me come out of this beautiful skin, a new snake in a new and lovelier skin. That is birth." '

Yes, that is birth : but it is also death, the shedding of old forms. And so, if I were to take a text for what I want to say, I should choose the saying of Jesus, that, ' Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth by itself alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.'

Long before Jesus came into the world, a race of visionaries had made the same truth their own, and told the story of creation in the same way.

' The earth was waste and void ; and darkness was upon the face of the deep '—that is death.

' And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters and God said, Let there be light, and there was light '—that is birth.

A long line of artists, discoverers, men of science, ordinary folk, have found life in losing it, rather as Oliver Goldsmith said, in giving it away with both hands. It is the way of all great adventures and of all *young* men and women. Those who have the gift of admiration, yet with caution, turn gladly from the little lusts and self-seekings of a shallow generation to the old and lonely poet who boasted that he had given his eyesight deliberately to the cause of his country's freedom. Bleak and ugly, and hunted and, above all,

a failure, this John Milton makes even the confession of his emptiness sublime :

> My hopes all flat, Nature within me seems
> In all her functions weary of herself.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> My race of glory run and race of shame,
> And I will shortly be with those that rest.

But, beside this gospel in the world, there lives the plausible teaching of Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who distrusts the poets, while he likes to hear them, because, he says, the average man is not a poet and looks foolish in the armour of a hero. Mr. Hilaire Belloc has adequately summed up this teaching in two lines :

> Always keep a hold of nurse,
> For fear of finding something worse.

And Mr. Galsworthy has portrayed at large, in the *Forsyte Saga*, the society that adopted it.

It is a cautious, reasonable principle that bids us fall in love profitably and write up ' Safety First ' on the lintel of our doors. Take care of your health, take care of your morals, take care of your job, and your pocket. Build armaments to guard your property, and shelter your soul under defence mechanisms, lest haply a shrewd and uncharitable neighbour find your weakness. And then that gallant fellow Simon the fisherman, forgetting his Master's advice, tries to stand up to the laughter of a servant-girl. Poor Simon ! And the servant with one talent prudently wraps and wraps it round, saying to himself, ' I'm running no risks.' And Iscariot complains of Love's wastefulness, and the contracted labourers complain of Love's generosity. Poor little Worldly Wiseman, and his prudence ! It is governing most of the world at present, getting wiser and more worldly, so that we have

really become expert in killing, and in frightening one another.

I heard a missionary speech once, entirely composed of warnings about what would happen to the world if—— When I was a Tommy we were plentifully warned about what would happen to us if—— When I was at the school I was kept in order sometimes by people who told me what I should suffer if—I was found out. Shame is a common reaction to this argument. Civilized people sometimes live as if the one thing that really mattered in this world was to be ashamed of things—and especially of beautiful things, of your simplicity, your religion, your candour, your sex. And I have noticed repeatedly, with a thrill of joy, that, when this kind of solemn argument is used on healthy girls and boys, they 'register' solemnity for the sake of good manners and wholly ignore it. Their minds reject the argument of fear. I raise a silent 'Hallelujah' every time I see them reject it. I'll tell you why.

Just that wise and worldly appeal to prudence every now and then turns Europe into a shambles. Just that appeal to prudence founded the systems of caste and infant marriage in India. Mr. Worldly Wiseman has riveted hypocrisy upon our English religion, and made us behave ourselves as if God had set us in a tiring-room to adopt all kinds of silly and unconvincing moral poses before a spiritual looking-glass. If you take up the study of psychology you will find that this attitude of defence, and its attendant emotion of fear—hidden sometimes deep in the subconscious—generate mental and moral disease.

'Forsyte,' prudence, cowardice, respectability, the tolerable and safe average—that is the unhallowed thing because it is the unromantic thing. It is to live on the assumption that God is asleep and to encounter life without reverence, as if you could live it with half

your energies, while you save the other half against a rainy day.

Life is a divine gift : you must not dream of taking it with one hand while you hold on to the railings with the other.

There is a natural consequence of this experienced and prudent philosophy—this essential pessimism of the over-ripe and the exhausted. It is the mind which says, care nothing, think nothing, hope nothing : have a good time when you can, and grouse when you can't. The faces of those who adopt this mode of living remind me of the days when we marched and marched into the line, snatching what solace we could, and refusing to think beyond the present pleasure or immediate pain. They are faces with the blinds drawn. They hide empty and derelict hearts—to let, unfurnished. Nothing in the world looks more desolate or homeless. And they are desolate just because they fear to be desolate. Everything comes to such people as an inhibition. The challenge of a job automatically puts them to flight. No sooner does half their mind murmur, ' I ought to do so and so,' than the other half clamours, ' but I don't want to.' And Life for them is a process of continual bankruptcy, a compounding with their creditors at a shilling in the pound.

Motors, clothes, wits, bank-balances, snobbery, whisky, betting, excitement of all kinds, pious behaviour—every conceivable disguise is used to hide their nakedness from their own eyes and to deceive themselves into thinking that life is what it isn't. They must look smart in order to persuade themselves that they aren't as ugly as they feel, must flatter themselves loudly enough to drown the still small voice of ' fiddlesticks.'

You must not despise these little people. They are sad—all the more pathetic because their sadness is so trifling and mean. But you can see perhaps the reason

for their sorrow. Their true love has gone far away. Romance has forsaken them and left them unhallowed and bleak. They are living in a world of make-up and footlights. Jesus called them actors.

They dare not die. And so Death tyrannizes over them. Their whole life is a running away from dying, and so they cannot create. Their threescore years and ten have no glory upon them, and no Easter morning. They have never discovered that all experience is a deal with Love, and to obey Love even to the uttermost is man's highest majesty.

'If you want to be full-grown, give all that you are.'

'I lay down My life.'

Love gave us a glorious thing called sex. Sex is the power Love has over your body to make it lay down its life—its comfort, gratification, self-seeking—to lay it all down for no reason in the world but love. That is why misuse of sex or dealing in sexual dishonour brings always a terrible recompense. Not only the kind of dishonour that respectability recoils from, but also the kind of dishonest shame and indecent reticence that respectability prefers—any kind of paltering or falsehood, 'the expense of spirit in a waste of shame.'

Sex is the body's answer to God's demand for sacrifice. (And sacrifice, let me remind you, means to make something sacred.) It is the age-old power of youth to leap into the adventure of creation—art, science, business, machines, beauty of all kinds, and, above all, human life. And you make sacrifice not to ensure any one's happiness (as if that were possible), but to ensure some one's freedom to be himself, to flower, and to achieve a divine destiny. To fall in love is simply to act like the grain of wheat which fell into the ground, and died into the harvest.

We were made to fall in love—many of us with some person—but all of us somehow, to fall in love. Look at

that phrase—fall in love. It takes me back to a hymn whose meaning I learnt on the fire-step. Listen :

> O love, Thou bottomless abyss,
> My sins are swallowed up in Thee.
> . . . . . .
> With faith I plunge me in this sea ;
> Here is my hope, my joy, my rest.

Fall into it, plunge into it, head over ears into it, drown in it, die into it.

Very simply, what does that mean ?

It means, in this matter of love and marriage, that when you love a girl or a boy, you throw your whole self into it without keeping back any of the price. You don't ask yourself, What am I going to get out of it. You don't hurry after the pleasurable part of it or run away from the painful. You don't hastily cover up your defects, or your sins, and instruct your conscience to say kind things about your complexes. It means that you stand the drudgery, humble and deny yourself—not because you think it's right to do so, but because in giving you want to give yourself just as you are, without one plea.

The tragedy begins always when, instead of *falling* in love, people only *stoop* into it—for stooping is a strain on the heart and a weight on the head. To stoop—you know what that is—to stick to your own ground all the more carefully because your balance is precarious. That is what people do with love sometimes. They love with their senses, but not with their common sense ; with their imagination, not with themselves. Or they give their time, money, thought, and conscience—everything but their souls. They will become sentimental or energetic or wasteful or melancholy or intoxicated with love—but not unselfish. They read about it, look at it, fondle and flirt with it—but they will not be crucified for it. They shirk the

real sacrifice and miss the real beauty. Sometimes it takes them years to discover that love funking the Cross is the saddest and profanest kind of prostitution : and love that will not lay down its life will find life rot and fester through all kinds of neurosis, boredom, even adultery, until, in its reputable middle age, it has nothing left but mean concealments and little lies.

Self-indulgence—indulgence, for instance, of your precious gift of being righteous at some one else's expense—is always a mortal enemy of sex, always an easy get out for those who fear to love infinitely, always a sign that you are shirking things somewhere.

If you love any one, then you will take up your cross—I don't mean self-consciously, like a ' Christian martyr ' making a virtue of it, but unself-consciously, happily you will play the man, take up your cross, and follow the Man.

Put it another way. A portrait-painter told me that in his job the important thing is not to know what people look like, but to realize what it feels like to look like that. Well, that is the way of love—not to look *at* some one and say, How beautiful ; but to look *with* some one at the world he or she faces. There are mothers, for instance, who like to dress their little children up—morally and bodily—and show them off to their friends as a credit to the family. There are other mothers who care only that their children shall grow freely. They know not only what the children want now, but what they are going to want next. They know—the hardest of all—when to take themselves out of the way. They look *with*, not *at* their children.

There are girls who won't allow their fiancés to stop admiring or begin to understand. They are always on show. On the other hand, there are girls—but so many of you know the real girl that I needn't say any more.

Look *with*, not *at*—that is sympathy, the first fruit

of love—the power to plunge out of your own world and live in some one else's. It is the mind which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, was found in fashion as a man. He did not look at us and call us miserable sinners. He faced our prospect and was obedient to the conditions of our life. He knew what it felt like to be a dying thief or a sinful woman, or even you or I. And I have sometimes questioned whose eyes He was looking through, whose hell He was sharing, when He went out crying, 'My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'

To go there and to share that unfathomable darkness—it meant courage. Yes? It meant love.

'Tis love, 'tis love, Thou diedst for me.

In that unspeakable moment are Love and Death at one.

See, from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down:
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small:
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Do not mistake me. Love is blessedness, not grief; it is present mirth and present laughter; it is all the gaiety and tenderness, all the humour and maytime, of the world. It is the glory of Easter morning and of those who share, without shame or flinching or the necessity to conceal, all the mystery of life. Only angels can sing about its advent into the world—so divine it is.

But remember it always takes two to make or mar one sweetheart. Remember that, when you say or think or sing 'I love you,' you are using God's words, and you must use them in God's way. So, if you are thinking of saying them one to another, I wish you the best in God's name.

T. S. Gregory.

PRAYER :

O God, forasmuch as without Thee, we are not able to please Thee, mercifully grant that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts. May we seek what is true, see what is beautiful, love what is pure, and follow what is right, for the sake of Him who is Truth and Loveliness, Purity and Righteousness, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMN :

EARTH's ten thousand voices
Daily rise and fall ;
But there's one within me
Clearer than them all :
'Tis the voice of Jesus ;
And I do not know
When its tones first sounded,
'Tis so long ago.

At the parting of the ways,
At the crisis of my days,
Thou art calling, calling, calling ;
And my heart its Lord obeys.

As the days of childhood
Happily have sped,
Oft the voice has thrilled me :
Follow Me ! it said,
Either in the accents
Of authority,
Or of love sore wounded—
As from Calvary.

Speak, Thy servant heareth ;
Speak what'er Thou wilt ;
Let me know Thy mercy ;
Let me know my guilt.
Conquer my perverseness ;
Cure me of delay :
Save me, Lord and Saviour ;
Save—this very day.

IV

FOLLOW ME

I WANT you to notice the refrain you have just been singing : ' At the crisis of my days.' Is there a ' crisis ' of youth ? One is apt to think of the ' crisis ' of age, when utter danger or impending disaster is too certainly indicated ; but youth, with its swinging stride and steady pulse, must surely be many stages removed from crisis. Will you be patient if I advance the doctrine that it is emphatically in youth that the critical situation must be faced ? The critical moment in the life of a river is when it tumbles definitely on one side of the watershed ; the critical moment in the life of a man is when he sees with the eyes of understanding and takes hold of that which is good. Age is not the time of crisis, but of glory or of tragedy ; and where a man will sit at eighty depends largely upon the direction he takes at eighteen.

This conviction furnishes an ever-increasing sense of urgency in the presentation of the evangel to the young men and women of this age. So much may happen, so much must happen, in the ' critical ' years, that it would be criminal to let a policy of drift determine the tendency of the future. What, then, has religion to offer to youth ? Many things ; most of which will be discovered if and when the first wise decision has been made. It is of the first step that I wish to speak to you now. Religion—the Gospel of Jesus—does not offer, primarily, a code of ethics, nor a philosophy of Life, nor a way of escape from the tragic bias towards evil. The first offer of Christianity is Christ : the gift of

Jesus is Himself. And it is the acceptance or rejection of this offer that constitutes the crisis of youth. I can understand a hesitancy to accept at once the full ethical teaching of the New Testament ; or a doubt as to the adequacy, for a Western mind, of the Pauline philosophy ; but when the Lord of Life stands at the parting of the ways and asks a man to share His unending pilgrimage—the decision is not merely for better or worse, it is for life or death.

It is interesting to notice how completely the position taken by Jesus at the outset of His ministry has captured the judgement of the modern mind. It is only the hopelessly benighted men who speak of Him as out of date. Take the three spheres of physique, of intellect, of social ethic.

(1) I want you to notice in all the records of our Lord's teaching and activity the emphasis he laid upon hygiene. Do not be startled at that term. The wonder of the Incarnation is bound up with the purity of the body. Matter was not essentially evil in the sight of Jesus ; He was radiantly healthy, and 'radiated' health. You remember how He said, '"Virtue" is gone out of Me.' It was not a mere formula of beneficence when he said, 'I will, be thou clean.' Believe me, Jesus knew more about a healthy body than did the Greek in his gymnasium. The school-clinic is only one outcome of the teaching and practice of Jesus, and by no means a complete sequence of His doctrine. He who gathered into His arms little children knew the sin and cruel selfishness that doomed so many Palestinian babies to a hopeless struggle against 'taint of blood.' So to the formula given above He added : 'Sin no more.' I rejoice in the modern cult of 'health' ; it is a glorious thing to see those who are in the 'teens' striding away over moor or hill, with a swinging step and a colour that is innocent of chemistry : let me thank God and take

courage. But let me also be a prophet of understanding. Your body will need more than a cold bath and a spell of 'physical jerks.' Appetites and passions are not controlled by these means. The drill sergeant has not the last word about the physical fitness of the squad. Jack London tried to tell you that; a hundred broken giants on the Yukon sadly point the same tragic moral. There stands One by your side who would fain lead you in the way of perfect health; who may break your body on a cross, but will never suffer it to rot in a moral swamp.

(2) I am old enough to remember with a smile some men who, in the late Victorian period, wrote and spoke of the teaching of the Gospels as old-fashioned and derelict. The truth is that there was a Galilean workman who, before He was thirty years of age, had thought out the problems of life and had found the essential solution. In His public ministry He taught that solution to rich and poor, to Jew and to Greek. Never has that solution been known to fail; never has it been bettered. The 'painful riddle of the earth' was solved by the 'Son of Man'; you may or may not care to accept that solution, but it holds the field. Whatever you may do with the creeds of the Church, you cannot disprove the creed of the Christ. War has flouted it; commerce has denied it; nationality has hampered it; ecclesiastics have blundered about it; but there has been no acceptable revised edition of the evangel. For Christ to confute the keenest intellects of His age was child's-play; and the ghosts of all the Caesars must wonder what is happening at Geneva. I often think how much at home Jesus would be at a gathering of the League of Nations. Every decision that ultimately wins the approval of men of good-will is to be found in the teaching of our Lord. Clever men are seen to have been but wiseacres; those who scoffed at the Sermon on the Mount

have only preached a Sermon of the Pit. I beg you not to be alarmed when some modern biologist issues a 'startling' book that seems to threaten the foundations of the Christian faith. The biologist who is pre-eminent in the medical school has been seen to cut a poor figure in the home circle. And a revolver-shot has been known to punctuate the final philosophy of a wise fool. You are to think ; to think without fear or prejudice ; to think as though eternal issues depended upon the decision you are making. But thought depends upon more than logical formulae and a careful marshalling of facts. The problems of the school are not always to be settled in the study ; and a sound judgement is as much a matter of atmosphere as of data. Can I help you in this connexion ? I want to ! The years—and much travail—have taught me that there stands in the way of all thoughtful and honest men One who knows the beginning and the end ; whose name is Alpha and Omega ; who quietly says, 'I have overcome the world,' and who, caring for the answer you are to return, says, 'Come apart with Me, and let us think together, that we may one day work together.' With such a Master of thought, you are not likely to go far wrong in your thinking.

(3) Now body and brain are but instruments. Their culture only leads up to the question : 'What shall I do with these possessions ?' In other words, what about life ? To such a question there will come a confusing medley of answers. I often think that youth, seeking a wise leader, is very much like a tyro in travel dumped in some spot 'East of Suez.' Strange and picturesque figures vehemently call and daringly pluck at him and his baggage. Each man is trustworthy and all the rest are rogues. Or a slim, wheedling figure comes with insinuating stealth, promising all that the novice is likely to desire. But somewhere in the crowd there often stands a man

with a slip of paper, bearing a few words of commendation from a former traveller who tried the man and found him to be worthy. There is a safe guide. I read with interest the protestations of men and of institutions who promise so lavishly and so convincingly that you shall soon be on the way to an easy career. Believe me ; you cannot go thus gaily careering into a ' career.' Life is not like that. You may be able thus to get a situation, but it may be a very awkward situation. I am going to ask you to think as much of aspects as of prospects. So much depends upon your outlook upon life, and it is just here that you need the fellowship of Jesus. We often hear of His unique teaching about life ; but remember that this was made possible by His wonderful way of regarding life. Here, again, I am claiming that all the best we have in the realm of social service is due to Him. ' Copec ' is the gift of Christ. Learn what obtains in countries where the Gospel is not known. Listen to men in our own land who despise the teaching of Jesus. Read the biographies of men and women who have been what is called politely ' egocentric.' In every case the last chapter has been tragedy or shame ; and the last chapter has often been near the first chapter. You may be told of glittering prizes and fadeless laurel. But I cannot forget a deathless picture of Death with the under-written legend : ' *Sic transit gloria mundi.*' Here, then, is crisis enough. You have the priceless treasure of your youth. It can be spent once, and only once. In what noisy bazaar will you look for a pearl of great price ? How can you tell if that man be a trickster or if that woman be a decoy ? To-day you have a goodly garb ; how if in a decade you feel the icy wind whistling about your rags ? Believe me, the Church does care about you ; and because it cares I am asking you to listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd who knows you and wishes to lead you.

This is the first lesson of your trained youth ; to learn to distinguish the voice of Jesus. By prayer and fasting—the kind of fasting you undergo when you are in for your ' Final '—let your soul have a chance to listen. If you are trying to ' get ' Berlin on the wireless, and some fellow keeps on chattering, you tell him to ' shut up.' Say *that* to ambition, to pride, to sloth, to all the chattering apes of the ' Kingdom of the Here and Now.' Do not think of the long to-morrow, and what may happen to you then : one step is enough, and that is the step on to the wise path. God has His scheme of things, and in that scheme He has left an opening for you ; and He has waited patiently until you grew to man's or woman's estate, and now He says, ' I want you to help me with the crowd of wandering, suffering men.' Yes, I know what it means. You simply cannot do as you like. There have been dreams ; you have heard voices. Father, the professor, and the maiden aunt have looked up to you as the bright jewel in the family coronet. I am sorry ; but there is One who wants just that jewel in His crown of Life. Do you care ? You do not want me to tell lies ! I guess it must feel great to have your chum's hand on your shoulder in congratulation : do you know what it is to have your Lord's arm in yours in fellowship ? To see your name on the shop-front ; to see the brass plate on your door ; to sail the cruise that your skill has charted ; to hear the plaudits of frantic devotees ; these may be—but how if Jesus shall say they must not be ? Do you ask impatiently : ' Why should He interfere ? ' Why does love ever interfere ? Have you ever tried to write an essay on ' The Interference of Love ' ? Try ; and you will find that you have written either an epic or a tragedy. And let me assure you that, in the end, nothing else will make you happy. The voice of God has the quality of echoing, and, once heard, it haunts for

ever. Love is your destiny, and God is that Love.

I had a friend who was so brilliant that I ever wondered how he became my friend. The world was his for the asking ; the road of possibility was flooded with a golden promise. He chose his sphere, and it was a noble one ; for he had a noble nature. Came an evening in his study when One drew near and whispered his name. Then to the listening genius He said : 'Yes, you have chosen well ; but I can choose better still. Think this out again with Me.' And so my friend had a second thought. And he followed Jesus to the Congo, and lies there dead—and happy.

I have said what I came to say, and perchance you have heard another voice than mine saying, as I could never say it, 'Follow Me.' Will you answer, dare you answer :

> With many dreams of fame and gold,
> Success and joy to make me bold,
> But dearer still my faith to hold,
> For my whole life, I come.

JAMES ELLIS.

SERVICE OF DEDICATION:

I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

We love Him, because He first loved us.

Just as I am, Thine own to be,
Friend of the young who lovest me,
To consecrate myself to Thee,
O Jesus Christ, I come.

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

In the glad morning of my day,
My life to give, my vows to pay,
With no reserve and no delay,
With all my heart I come.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life. Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

I would live ever in the light,
I would work ever for the right,
I would serve Thee with all my might,
Therefore to Thee I come.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God—a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Just as I am, young, strong, and free,
To be the best that I can be,
For truth, and righteousness, and Thee,
Lord of my life, I come.

Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

With many dreams of fame and gold,
Success and joy to make me bold,
But dearer still my faith to hold,
For my whole life, I come.

Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.

And for Thy sake to win renown,
And then to take my victor's crown,
And at Thy feet to cast it down,
O Master, Lord, I come.

BENEDICTION.

V

THE METHODIST APPEAL TO EXPERIENCE

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From the beginning Methodism has stressed the certainties possessed in the evangelical experience. The seat of religious authority is within. The doctrine of Assurance is the unique contribution Methodism has made to evangelical theology. In contrast with assertions of priestly absolution, Methodism exalts the doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit. The apologetic value of Christian experience is sustained by the modern appeal to the psychological analysis of the religious consciousness. The gains of the study of the Psychology of Religion for methods of religious education and for evangelistic efforts are worthy of fuller recognition. At the same time the challenges to the validity of religious experience in general, and to evangelical experience in particular, which certain schools of psychological research are making, need to be carefully considered and frankly dealt with. If the appeal to experience rested in a succession of purely subjective impressions in human consciousness, involving no objective Godward reality, the basis of evangelical faith would be imperilled and the Methodist emphasis gravely misplaced.

HYMN :

O WHAT shall I do my Saviour to praise,
So faithful and true, so plenteous in grace,
So strong to deliver, so good to redeem
The weakest believer that hangs upon Him !

How happy the man whose heart is set free,
The people that can be joyful in Thee !
Their joy is to walk in the light of Thy face,
And still they are talking of Jesus's grace.

Their daily delight shall be in Thy name ;
They shall as their right Thy righteousness claim ;
Thy righteousness wearing, and cleansed by Thy blood,
Bold shall they appear in the presence of God.

For Thou art their boast, their glory, and power ;
And I also trust to see the glad hour,
My soul's new creation, a life from the dead,
The day of salvation, that lifts up my head.

For Jesus, my Lord, is now my defence ;
I trust in His word, none plucks me from thence ;
Since I have found favour, He all things will do ;
My King and my Saviour shall make me anew.

Yes, Lord, I shall see the bliss of Thine own,
Thy secret to me shall soon be made known ;
For sorrow and sadness I joy shall receive,
And share in the gladness of all that believe.

PRAYER.

THE READING OF THE SCRIPTURES :

'The Gospel of Peace' – Rom. v. 1–5
'The Ministry of the Spirit' Rom. viii. 1–2, 12–17, 26–28

HYMN :

How happy are they
Who the Saviour obey,
And have laid up their treasure above !
Tongue cannot express
The sweet comfort and peace
Of a soul in its earliest love.

That comfort was mine,
When the favour divine
I first found in the blood of the Lamb ;
When my heart it believed,
What a joy it received,
What a heaven in Jesus's name !

Jesus all the day long
Was my joy and my song ;
O that all His salvation may see !
He hath loved me, I cried,
He hath suffered, and died,
To redeem such a rebel as me.

O the rapturous height
Of the holy delight
Which I felt in the life-giving blood !
Of my Saviour possessed
I was perfectly blessed
As if filled with the fullness of God.

I

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT—THE FACT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Our subject reminds us of the essential inwardness of the Christian religion. This is a truth which needs to be enforced with the clearest emphasis, and its teaching was never more needed than now. The great certainties of the Christian religion are within us. Throughout the moral and spiritual education of His people, God has always emphasized the fact of the nearness of the spiritual. The word of life and obedience and reward which He spoke unto men was, He declared, not hidden from them. It was not in the heights, or in the depths, or beyond the seas, but 'the Word is nigh thee, in thy heart.' The revealer of the Father taught the same truth when He said, 'The Kingdom of God is within you.' The truth and value of this have been abundantly verified in Christian experience. Martin Luther found that priests, pilgrimages, and penances were alike unable to give him rest. At length the word of liberty was spoken in his own heart: 'Martin, the just shall live by faith.' George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, confessed that during his weary search for peace he had given up hope of help from the recognized teachers of religion: 'Then, oh, then I heard a voice which said, "There is One, even Jesus Christ, who can speak to thy condition"; and when I heard that my heart did leap for joy.' Priestly absolution in the one case, and a lifeless formalism in the other, were ineffectual

to satisfy the yearnings of their spirits, but what Luther and Fox had sought in vain elsewhere they found within their own hearts in the revealing light of the Word and in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. This is the vital fact in all Christian experience. It is our very life. Some say, 'Lo, here! Come, and behold our systems, our ritual, our prestige!' And others say, 'Lo, there! Go, and inspect our busy schemes, our numerous methods and complex organizations!' But the Kingdom of God may be neither here nor there. Listen to the voice of Jesus: 'The Kingdom of God is within you'—in the pure heart and the tender conscience and the loving soul and the obedient will and the sanctified spirit.

Methodism has always placed unique emphasis upon this, the inward, evangelical experience; and in doing so has moved, we believe, in harmony with the teachings of the Word and with the nature of revealed and practical religion. In one of the earliest meetings of the Methodist Union Committee, the late William Bradfield said that God had committed a special deposit of truth to Methodism. The special deposit is that pearl of all experiences ever realized in the heart of man—the conscious knowledge of God, the living spiritual experience. *There* is the seat of religious authority—in the realm of the spirit. I do not see how it can be otherwise. The foundation truth of religion is that God is a Spirit. They who worship Him must worship Him in the Spirit. They who serve Him must live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit. His Church and religion and Kingdom are spiritual. Where the Spirit is, there is the body of Christ; and only the presence and the experience of the Spirit can make a man a member, and a conscious member, of the Body of Christ. Our religion is not ceremonial, or historical only, or doctrinal merely; it is spiritual and experimental. We believe and preach that a

man may have within himself a conscious knowledge of the divine favour, and that such knowledge may be to him as clear as the sunlight and as irresistible as the very power of God. The special deposit of truth committed to Methodism is the doctrine of assurance.

The assurance is mediated by the Spirit. There can be no misunderstanding among Christians as to what is meant by the term 'The Spirit.' It is a simple and sufficient description of the Spirit of God, and is the description most frequently employed in the New Testament. The words of Jesus and of His apostles had familiarized the Early Church with the conception and the knowledge of the Spirit. Jesus had said that by virtue of His perfect oneness and fellowship with the Father He would, after His ascension to heaven, ask for and send to His people another Comforter, the Spirit : a Person invisible, inaudible, intangible, who should carry on in their souls the work of God as revealed in Christ. Jesus said that the Spirit, when come, should 'convince,' and 'teach,' and 'guide,' and 'bear witness.' And the Apostle Paul, in what is perhaps the classical passage on the subject, says that 'the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit.' The assurance is given to 'our spirit'—a term which represents man's moral and spiritual nature, the capacity to apprehend divine truth and to become conscious of God and responsive to His will and presence.

There is a concurrence of witness. The two witnesses, the Holy Spirit and the human spirit, unite in testifying to the same fact. There is the most convincing agreement between the two. We know that the human spirit may be impressed by, and respond to, another spirit. Wordsworth teaches that the spirit of man may be filled with deep harmony in the presence of nature, of that spirit which moves and rolls through all things.

> I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.

And the poet adds that under the power of such harmony and joy ' we see into the life of things.' The human spirit responds with understanding and vision and joy to the motion of that spirit which moves through nature. Many know the same to be true of music. To the musical temperament music is something more than a concourse of sweet sounds ; it is a congenial and delightful atmosphere in which the true music-lover moves with deep content and satisfaction. George Macdonald, in *Robert Falconer*, tells of a man whose violin was ' the one angel that let the sky shine through,' and says, ' Music to such is poetry in solution, and generates that infinite atmosphere common to both musician and poet.' To such temperaments, as Milton says, music is something that dissolves them into ecstasies, and brings all heaven before their eyes. What the spirit of nature and the spirit of music do for the nature-lover and the music-lover, the Holy Spirit, in a far more wonderful and adorable sense, does for those who are the children of God. An ' infinite atmosphere ' is generated, in which the child of God moves with unspeakable freedom and joy. The beauty and music and glorious life of the spiritual world enter into his soul and become a part of his being. He, on his part, responds with holy confidence to the movement of that Infinite Spirit who bathes his soul in peace and joy. There is the deepest and divinest harmony between the Spirit and his spirit. Using the words in their best sense, he is in tune with the Infinite. It is possible for two human

souls to be so akin in nature, so intimate and perfect in their sympathy and their understanding of each other, that either of them could tell you what both were thinking on some given subject. The two minds have become fused ; they are twin souls, sharing the same thoughts and sympathies. St. Paul says that the believer has ' the mind of the Spirit ' ; on the subject of his adoption into God's family the believer has a vital insight into the thought and attitude of the Spirit. The mind of the Spirit and the mind of the spiritual man realize and declare the same fact, which is that the man is a child of God. The heart experiences the endearments of divine love. God declares by His Spirit, ' Thou art My child.' And the human spirit responds, ' Thou art my Father.' The happy and assured effect of it all is, as Wesley said, ' an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God.' The unsearchable riches of Christ are become a present possession. ' Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.' The things unseen, unheard, unconceived, have been revealed unto us and are possessed by us. The peace of a happy heart, the smile of a reconciled God, the companionship of the living Saviour, life enriched by the intimacies of divine love, and eternity lighted up by the radiant glory—all are ours who ' have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.' We possess our possessions.

The implications of the fact are many and far-reaching, and can only be briefly indicated. They concern the believer's privileges and duties as these are related to himself, to God, and to his fellow men.

One great result implicit in the Spirit's witness is

the glorification of Christ. There is a consciousness which is common to all who have received the Spirit —the consciousness of Christ. The mission of the Spirit is to reveal the Saviour. He brings home to the soul the beauty and glory of the Saviour's person and work. The Spirit takes the grand central fact of Christianity, which is Christ—Christ, who died for our sins, and rose again, and is alive for evermore, and enthroned in the worship and wonder of heaven —and the Spirit takes that great saving fact and makes it real and vivid to men. As Jesus revealed the Father, so the Spirit is the revealer of Jesus. He is the evidence in the believer's heart that Jesus has passed from the Cross to the Throne, that Jesus lives and reigns and saves, so that the believer is led to worship Him as Christ and Lord, trusting Him as Saviour, obeying Him as Master, loving Him as Friend, crowning Him as King.

The witness of the Spirit ensures to the believer an abiding companionship. This is one of the most urgent and gracious of blessings. It has been said that 'the need for an adequate companion is the permanent root of religion.' Jesus met that intensely human need by the sending of the Comforter. Shortly before Socrates was taken from his disciples, one of them mourned the fact that they were being left orphans. Jesus said to His disciples, 'I will not leave you orphans, I will send you another Comforter.' Bishop Westcott says the word used by Jesus means 'one called to the side of another,' to guide and counsel and support. The feeling of orphanage is annulled. The sense of loneliness is banished. A Mighty Helper is by our side. We need never think of the Spirit as far away, but as ever-present, divinely gracious, infinitely loving, and ready always to give His guidance and help. He is an active Friend, the Friend of the Saviour and the Friend of the soul, working in men

for Christ and strengthening them by His might in the inner man.

> We are not orphans left alone
> Without the knowledge of Thy grace;
> Thy Spirit broods around our own
> And folds us in Thy great embrace.

The Spirit's witness implies also the development and perfecting of Christian character. Redemption is progressive, and should be complete. A soul in whom Christ is glorified, and a soul holy enough to be the bride of Christ in the great day of rejoicing: nothing less than that is the aim of the Spirit. It is the Spirit's work to give unity and consistency and completeness to the Christian life. A life of sin is described as the 'works of the flesh,' a plurality, a mass of discords and disorders, life at cross purposes. But we read of 'the fruit of the Spirit'; there is unity and harmony, what has been called 'one rich central principle' leavening the whole life and causing growth and fruitfulness in rich profusion. 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.' That is not a list of separate graces, one independent of the other, but they are related virtues, essential parts of one complete character. The Christian life in its sum or total is to come under the power of the One unifying and sanctifying Spirit. It would be a labour of love to linger on the words quoted, but let us take one which has a most intimate bearing on the believer's personal blessedness and Christian service: 'The fruit of the Spirit is joy.' The religion of the Spirit is a joyous experience. Dr. Peake always maintained that emotion was a worthy element in the religious life. Life without joy would be like a sky without stars or a world without sunshine, and God showed infinite thought for men when He made joy one of the

animating principles of religious experience. The joy of the Lord is our strength, and His saints in all ages have found in it abiding inspiration. I do not believe that happiness is so much sinful intoxication, and that those who produce it are so many illicit distillers. I believe that happiness is the wine of life, that it flows from eternal fountains in the Father's heart, and that He wants all His people to drink of the gladdening stream. 'The fruit of the Spirit is joy.' Here is the testimony of a happy child of God —I am quoting from Billy Bray, that man of apostolic life and experience—'It was in November, but what day of the month I do not know. Everything looked new to me—the people, the fields, the cattle, the trees. I was like a new man in a new world. I spent the greater part of my time in praising the Lord. I could say with Isaiah, "O Lord, I will praise Thee, for though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away and Thou comfortedst me." I told all that I met what the Lord had done for my soul. They said I was a madman, but they meant I was a glad-man, and, glory be to God, I have been glad ever since.' Manifestations vary, as temperaments and circumstances differ, but the great truth abides that God's people may abound in joy through the Holy Spirit. So with every other Christian virtue. The Spirit works for the complement and enrichment of the whole personality. The character puts on grace and symmetry. The soul grows in moral likeness to God, in righteousness and in true holiness, under the power of the indwelling Spirit.

And every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness,
Are His alone.

A further result of the Spirit's witness will be the desire and the power for service. The Spirit works

through the redeemed individual for the redemption of humanity. A yearning for the salvation of men, of all men, and the power by which the saving work can be achieved—all this worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit. 'He that believeth on Me,' said Jesus, 'out of him shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive.' The man who has the Spirit becomes in a real and effective way a channel of blessing. Jesus is the Living Fountain, and the Spirit-filled Christian is a 'living watercourse,' conveying to others the faith and hope and love of the Saviour. But our exports cannot exceed our imports, and we must first receive of the Spirit's power if we are to send forth influences that are full of grace and godliness. Only they who are themselves moved can move others. To change the figure, the fire in our own hearts must burn intensely if we are to inflame the hearts of others. Many of us gathered here to-day are preachers of the gospel. Is not this our chief need, the 'tongue of fire'? I am not unmindful of other valuable equipments, but our primary and indispensable need is the fire. What else is there that can give spiritual point and edge to our preaching, that can make our words sharper than two-edged swords, and yet fill them with healing balm for the souls whom they wound? May the Spirit give to us tongues of fire and hearts of love to preach the reconciling word! Then our gospel will come to men, not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance. And not preachers and leaders only, but the whole commonalty of the Church, may feel the incoming and the outgoing of this mighty equipment. There is no aristocracy of privilege where the gift of the Spirit is concerned. In the Upper Room there were more than the apostles present, but Jesus drew no distinctions. To all of them He said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost.' He makes

no distinctions to-day, but waits to send His Spirit into the hearts of all who are prepared to receive Him.

And, finally, the Spirit in the heart is the 'first-fruits'; the pledge of the full harvest which is to be reaped. It is the 'earnest,' the first instalment, of the boundless and immortal possessions which are reserved for the children of God. The Spirit and 'life everlasting' are inseparably associated. The life which He imparts is the eternal life—life divine in quality and endless as Him from whom it came. The everlasting God is its source, and everlasting life with Him is its glorious destiny.

To realize all this, to possess the Spirit, to live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit, to be as conscious of Him as we are of the sunshine, to hold communion with Him as constantly and freely as we breathe the atmosphere—this is our happy privilege, and it would be our supreme joy and glory. May the communion of the Spirit abide with us evermore!

MOSES BOURNE.

HYMN :

My God, I am Thine ;
What a comfort divine,
What a blessing to know that my Jesus is mine !
In the heavenly Lamb
Thrice happy I am,
And my heart it doth dance at the sound of His name.

True pleasures abound
In the rapturous sound ;
And whoever hath found it hath paradise found.
My Jesus to know,
And feel His blood flow,
'Tis life everlasting, 'tis heaven below.

Yet onward I haste
To the heavenly feast :
That, that is the fullness ; but this is the taste !
And this I shall prove,
Till with joy I remove
To the heaven of heavens in Jesus's love.

II

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF EVANGELICAL EXPERIENCE

The task of psychology is that of helping us to a better understanding of human nature, and from that side alone it has a distinct word to say concerning evangelical experience. That word is profitable and encouraging, and it is relevant to the method and the message of evangelical religion. While science is not concerned with the value or validity of religious ideas, it is a significant fact that the most original and fruitful lines of recent psychological research converge on the creative experiences in life and character with which evangelical religion is supremely concerned.

One of the first fruits of the study of human nature by scientific method is that we have gained a new respect for personality. The Christian teacher, who is familiar with the method of Jesus—his sensitiveness to individual differences and needs ; his rejection of the burdens and uniformities of Pharisaic religion ; his way of leading men into the adventure of being themselves —will have rejoiced to notice that, in educational practice and in religious teaching, the psychologists have recovered that New Testament method. This is not merely the result of the fine work in genetic and educational psychology which is still going on in Switzerland ; it is reinforced by the psycho-analytic movement which has come to us from Austria. We are debtors to Greeks and barbarians, to the philosophical psychology which has recently supplanted

experimental method in Germany, and to the important studies which British psychologists have made among savage and primitive tribes. Russian work upon what is called the 'conditioned response' has leavened psychology everywhere, particularly in America, where research is now turning upon the two centres of experimental method and the technique of testing, with special regard to habits and behaviour. France has been concerned chiefly with medical psychology or mental healing, and the most notable work in Italy has been done in the field of neurology; yet a useful study of revivals has come to us from France, and of conversion from Italy. Any such geographical description of the schools of psychology exaggerates distinctions, yet it serves to show how a very ancient science has been marked in recent years by a bewildering variety of treatment and method. If there is one thing that modern psychology has to say, with emphasis, about evangelical experience, it is that no attempt must be made to standardize it. Human nature is of infinite variety in bodily and mental constitution, and it is unscientific as well as inhuman to demand uniformity in any spiritual experience. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit.'

It has sometimes been assumed that conversion is a purely religious experience, and that it only occurs in those communions which cultivate emotional revivals. Biology and psychology, twin sciences since the days of Aristotle, reveal the fact that conversion is not only one of the laws of life and evolution, but that it is the greatest of events in the growth of personality. Parallels drawn from the development of organic life, and from the chemical process of sublimation which at once changes and purifies, throw light upon the way

of spiritual progress, and they also suggest that the same spirit breathes through all creative activity. Many of the secrets of the soul's life have been revealed by patient and reverent research, and certain conclusions may be recorded. While it is true that the grace of God is illimitable, and that a man may be born again when he is old, it is true also that with the transition from childhood to youth and manhood, as reason, feeling, and driving-power mature, a spiritual crisis is a normal and natural fact. It is a crisis of the will, for what is called the surrender of the will is an act of decision, and it is related to a conscious aim, a hunger and thirst after purity and truth and God, a search for deliverance from inner discord and conflict, a craving for self-mastery and spiritual peace. The essential intellectual nature of conversion is also clear when it is seen that every decision is an act of judgement. Yet the dynamic of character is in the emotions and instincts. The whole functional movement in psychology is a direct witness to the supreme value of evangelical passion. Blake saw God in the thunder of thought and the flames of fierce desire, and the convert who describes his own supreme moment frequently uses the language of love at first sight as the only adequate expression of his spiritual experience.

Conversion is a marvellously complex process, and psychology demands that we must resist all attempts to mould it or conventionalize it into one pattern. In many cases it may be entirely unconscious, and there is from childhood to maturity a beautiful continuity in the spiritual life. ' Of such is the Kingdom of God,' said Jesus of the children of Galilee, and it is one of the tasks of evangelical education to prevent any fall from grace. It is a little alarming to be told, on the excellent authority of genetic psychology and the psycho-analytic school, that the little human being is frequently a finished product in his fourth or fifth year,

and only gradually reveals in later years what lies buried in him. Yet it is only in harmony with some of the most tremendous words of Jesus. The psychologist who spends a lifetime in studying the influence of congenital endowment and early environment, tells us that the most potent power on earth for the moulding of personality is that of the parent and teacher and friend of little children.

While the destiny of the generation to come is largely determined by the simplicity and reality of our own religious experience, and any weakness in handling the task of education would be fatal to a movement which is concerned with the formation of character, evangelicalism is unerringly right when it proclaims the possibility of sudden conversion. Preparation for a critical and creative moment may go on unseen in the unconscious regions of the soul, yet there are startling intuitions, ' flashes struck from midnights,' moments

> When the spirit's true endowments
> Stand out plainly from its false ones.

Religious education will miss its mark unless it provides a fitting moment for that crisis.

When we turn to the central affirmations of the evangelical faith, we find that they are at the very heart of human nature, as it is revealed by some of the most vital work in the field of psychology. Evangelical experience centres in the evangel : it has its roots in the gospel of spiritual freedom, living thought, and creative activity. The Christian way is a way of salvation from the heritage of fear and sin ; it is a way of forgiveness, reconciliation, love, joy, and peace. An almost identical description might be given of the aims of the Austrian doctors who have specialized on cases of nervous and mental breakdown, and of the work of the French specialists in mental healing. Clinical

studies have a peculiar value from the Christian point of view, for it was Christ Himself who said: 'They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'

Luther seized on a radical truth when he said that all Christian theology is based upon a sound doctrine of sin; and the Methodist and the evangelical Christian have always the distinction of having proclaimed forgiveness of sins as the heart of the Gospel. While a very humane theology revolted against the old doctrine of original sin, and a cultivated society tried to forget sin, the evil possibilities of the human heart still existed, and nerve specialists, psycho-analysts, and pathologists had to accept their challenge. The medical school of psychology, in spite of its queer words, and its unfortunate habit of mistaking of names for explanations, has done a real service by its research into the obscure, unconscious background of mental life, and by its insistence on frankness in facing hard facts. A hidden conflict brought out into the daylight loses half its dangers. There are human tendencies, explored by evolutionary psychology, which are shared by the whole race, and which provide material for a doctrine of original sin, especially when they are viewed in the light of spiritual aspiration and moral advance. Psychology has rediscovered the fact of sin. Although some special cases of moral disease may need the advice of a physician, in the main all this medical research points to the health and sanity of a religious experience that begins with the conviction of sin. Evangelical religion is in line with the vital psychology of the twentieth century when it sounds the classic call to sinners with new and refreshing clearness.

Education to face reality is not the final cure for mental and moral trouble, either in evangelism or in

pathology. Forgiveness is the only remedy for sin. The central process in the analytic method is what is known as transference, which simply means the turning of the patient's attention away from his distressing symptoms and conflicts, and the development of an affectionate interest in the person of the physician. This change of feeling, without which a cure is impossible, is curiously akin to religious faith. In both cases the result is deliverance from the vicious circle of desolating subjectivity, from alienation, self-loathing, fear, despair, into the freedom and discipline of faith, and faith in some one who stands for confidence, companionship, hope, and joy. One of the six hymns that the soldiers in the trenches always asked for was 'Jesu, Lover of my soul.' Fear is banished when some one cares for my soul. We can see an instinctive basis for this in the terrors of darkness or loneliness in childhood, which are banished by the companionship and protection of the parent. 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God.' Viewed from the evolutionary standpoint, this reconciliation is cosmic in its significance: it is man finding his true place in relation to reality, and adjusting himself to the laws and conditions of life as a whole. Yet these interpretations fall short of the evangelical truth that sin is only possible in the realm of personal relations, and forgiveness is only possible at the cost of personal suffering. We get nearer to the heart of the matter in the psychology of suffering and of the love which sorrows over sins and pursues its own ends through disgrace and dishonour worse than death. The study of emotion and sentiment shows that the function of sorrow is rooted and grounded in love, and that it is one of the central forces in the perfecting of character. Psychology brings us very near to the point at which we can see that there is blood on all precious things, and that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Forgiveness is so

often identified with the story of the Passion that we need to be reminded that all forgiveness is at the price of a cross. The psychology of character, drawing its material from the great literature of the world, shows that the need of forgiveness and its possibility through suffering love are rooted in the very nature of personality. It is with a strangely modern ring that we can speak of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Methodism has given us the classic expression of the joy of salvation, which overflows at once in a desire to save the whole world:

> 'Tis mercy all, immense and free ;
> For, O my God, it found out me !

Personal and social values are one for the radiantly happy soul whose communion with his Saviour has given him forgiveness and peace. Joy tends to expand the nature, and love is at once the dynamic of a living fellowship and of a passion for social righteousness. The societies and class meetings of Methodism, and the fellowships and social service unions of the modern Christian Church, are typical of the outward look of the true evangelical. Social psychology has still to explore the nature of community among men and nations, but the function of the self and the function of society have found their truest synthesis in that deep and true communion with God which finds its expression in love to man, and which is at the heart of evangelical experience.

Christianity was born in a Pentecostal season, and evangelical religion has always been characterized by seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The laws of rhythm in human life and the principles of social and crowd psychology show how normal and necessary are regular worship and the discipline of daily prayer, with a regularity as of sleeping and waking. Yet this same law points to the wider rhythm

of seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, and demands its own appropriate expression in seasonal social and religious gatherings of a more imposing and impressive order. This is the psychology of saints' days, anniversaries, and special periods for dedication or for missions and revivals. On these occasions, local and religious associations, personal memories, the spirit of expectancy, and a sensitiveness to spiritual meanings all combine with the appeal of hymns, music, and message to create that attitude of like-mindedness in which great and immeasurable things become possible. The dangers of these seasons are also made clear by abnormal psychology, for nervous and emotional excitement imperils the stability of character unless it finds an issue in daily discipline and the full Christian life of service and sacrifice. A real experience of God may fail to find its full expression if it is not followed by the guidance and education of evangelical fellowship. The real revival, like the real conversion, can be distinguished by its results. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' This West of England Church Congress may well be an example of what is in reality a revival meeting, and it may prove to the world once more that the genuine revival is a heaven-sent gift. Psychology points to Pentecost, when 'they were all with one accord in one place,' and, as they waited together, the flame of the divine Spirit touched them, and at the touch old pride and selfish caution, restraints and hindrances, were swept away, and a fire of passionate purity and devotion was kindled which is burning to-day more clearly than ever, even in the ends of the earth. It was more than like-mindedness that made the miracle of Pentecost. Those who gathered together had been very near the Cross, and, when men come together there, the Lord can do great things through them.

S. G. DIMOND.

HYMN :

O BREATH of God, breathe on us now,
And move within us while we pray ;
The spring of our new life art Thou,
The very light of our new day.

O strangely art Thou with us, Lord,
Neither in height nor depth to seek :
In nearness shall Thy voice be heard ;
Spirit to spirit Thou dost speak.

Christ is our Advocate on high ;
Thou art our Advocate within :
O plead the truth, and make reply
To every argument of sin.

But ah, this faithless heart of mine !
The way I know ; I know my Guide :
Forgive me, O my Friend divine,
That I so often turn aside.

Be with me when no other friend
The mystery of my heart can share ;
And be Thou known, when fears transcend,
By Thy best name of Comforter.

LET US PRAY :

Holy Spirit ! pity me,
Pierced with grief for grieving Thee ;
Present, though I mourn apart,
Listen to a wailing heart.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

Sins unnumbered I confess,
Of exceeding sinfulness ;
Sins against Thyself alone,
Only to omniscience known :

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

Deafness to Thy whispered calls,
Rashness midst remembered falls,
Transient fears beneath the rod,
Treacherous trifling with my God ;

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

Worldly cares at worship time ;
Grovelling aims in works sublime ;
Pride, when God is passing by ;
Sloth, when souls in darkness die ;

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

Chilled devotions, changed desires,
Quenched corruption's earlier fires ;—
Sins like these my heart deceive,
Thee, who only know'st them, grieve.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

O how lightly have I slept
With Thy daily wrongs unwept,
Sought Thy chidings to defer,
Shunned the wounded Comforter.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

Woke to holy labours fresh
With the plague-spot in my flesh,
Angel seemed to human sight,
Stood a leper in Thy light !

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

Still Thy comforts do not fail,
Still Thy healing aids avail ;
Patient Inmate of my breast,
Thou art grieved, yet I am blessed.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

O be merciful to me,
Now in bitterness for Thee !
Father, pardon through Thy Son
Sins against Thy Spirit done !

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

SILENT PRAYER.

III

THE VALIDITY OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

I INTEND to disobey that excellent rule which bids us always define our terms at the beginning. For one thing, there are no two words in language harder to define than religion and experience ; for another, to define religious experience would help no one unacquainted with it to understand it ; since, just as no definition of beauty would explain beauty to any one who had not experienced it, no definition of religious experience will make that term clear to those who do not share it. But those who listen to me to-day have a personal knowledge of what religious experience is, and need no meticulously-worded definition.

We know, then, what religious experience is, and not only do we know, but it is generally known, even by those who profess no personal acquaintance with religion. William James and others, twenty-five years or more ago, drew attention to the tremendous argument that could be based on religious experience. At the same time the scientific study of religion was demonstrating the existence of religion as a factor of first-rate importance in the social life of humanity from the earliest days downward. After that, it was no longer possible to regard religion as a system of superstitions foisted on the people by priestcraft. Religion is acknowledged now as a universal expression of the human spirit, and a factor of the utmost historical, psychological, and sociological importance. The

genuinely human character of religion, therefore, is recognized by every thinker to-day. What is questioned is not that. It is its divine character.

Let me put the matter thus: If I say that, on my way to the hall, I saw Dr. A. in the street, you do not doubt, if you regard me as a truthful person, that I refer to a genuine fact. If, however, you know indisputably that Dr. A. is at present in India, you can well believe that I had the experience of seeing some one, but you very much doubt my explanation of that experience as referring to Dr. A.

That is precisely how the matter stands as regards religious experience. We need waste no time in arguing that it is a genuine aspect of human experience. That is admitted. The question is of the correctness of our explanation of that experience. The believer is sure that his religious experience is a commerce between his soul and his God. There are others—not necessarily the almost extinct race of atheists, or the so-called rationalists, but psychologists, sociologists, and philosophers—who consider that the believer's explanation is not necessarily correct. They admit the facts of religious experience, but not the inferences the believer draws from them. Much in the same way many are prepared to admit most of the evidence offered to-day on behalf of Christian Science or Spiritualism, without accepting the doctrines which Christian Scientists or Spiritualists base upon that evidence. Hence our task in this paper.

In approaching this question of the validity of religious experience, we must first draw a distinction so clear and definite that it is extraordinary to find how often it is overlooked. It is this: The question of the psychological origin and character of religious experience is one thing, whilst the question of its reality —by that I mean the question whether it refers to God or to something else—is another. When first the

evolution of religion was traced back to the primitive beliefs of early man, a few drew the inference that this association with the credulity of savages discredited all religion, until they were made to see that our science, philosophy, art, music, and everything else developed from the same sources. Yet to-day, when some writers claim to show that religion is a matter of 'suggestion' or 'projection,' or whatever else, they assume forthwith that therefore it represents nothing more than a large-scale delusion. That is a process pilloried in text-books of logic as 'begging the question,' and one may add that it is a very shameless begging. We must keep a sharp distinction between questions of the origin and character and questions of the validity of religious experience. I propose to speak of both questions, because the first will certainly have an influence upon our approach to the second; but, none the less, it still remains that the first belongs to the sphere of psychology, the second to another sphere—that of metaphysics.

Turning first, then, to the psychological question of the character of religious experience, we meet a certain class of critics who seem to think that to say it is due to 'suggestion' is an 'open sesame' that unlocks the whole problem. Of course suggestion enters into religious experience; it enters into all experience; but that fact tells us nothing of the grounds of that experience. I may enter a room where, before a word is spoken, the grave faces of those present affect me by sheer suggestion at once. The smile dies on my lips. I become anxious and concerned. I may find that some serious trouble has befallen, or it may be that my friends determined to play a joke upon me. My behaviour is similar in each case; but in the one case we should say there was a 'real' cause for the suggestion, and that in the other there was not. In both cases it was owing to suggestion

that I suddenly found my mood changed, but between the sources of the two suggestions there is all the difference of an actual and an imaginary trouble. Suggestion is one thing ; the ultimate reality or otherwise of the cause of the suggestion is another.

That is to say that the fact that certain behaviour is largely influenced by suggestion does not tell us anything about the character of that which causes the suggestion, nor enable us to decide whether it is an actual or an imaginary thing. Therefore, even if the whole of religious experience were due to suggestion, the question whether a real or an imaginary God was the cause of the suggestion would remain to be settled. Some who should know better say that prayer is ' all auto-suggestion.' If this rash exaggeration were true, it would still remain an open question whether, if we live and move and have our being in God, there can be any auto-suggestion even, apart from Him. To speak of religious experience as suggestion, therefore, does not affect the question of its validity.

But a closer examination of the characteristics of religious experience compared with those of the types of experience which are most expressive of suggestion, does not in any way strengthen the hasty generalization that religious experience is a matter of suggestion pure and simple.

Let us work out the contrast briefly. The best examples of suggestion are the actions of a hypnotized person, or of an excited mob. In both cases, however powerful the suggestion, it is almost impossible to make those under its influence do anything dangerous or distasteful to themselves. A hypnotized person, for example, who is told to stab himself with a dagger, generally hesitates and refuses, sometimes coming out of the trance as we come out of a very bad dream, that wakes us up declaring ' It's only a dream.' Hypnotism has little power over the deepest impulses and instincts.

It is most effective when used to produce what the patient expects and wants. It is seldom permanent: attempts at curing bad habits by hypnotic suggestion have only in a few cases had any lasting success. In most instances the results have been very disappointing. There are marked limits to the power of hypnotism and suggestion. Freud abandoned the use of both, and his school claim to have no need of return to them.

On the other hand, religious experience shows marked differences on every point. The dangerous and distasteful are accepted with enthusiasm not only by ascetics and martyrs, but by thousands of ordinary folk, who cheerfully face great risks and undertake the hardest tasks for the Kingdom of God. Not even the deepest impulses or instincts escape the control of religion. What is unexpected and undesired again and again happens, not only to Saul on the road to Damascus, but to the ordinary man, driven against his will, so it seems in many cases, to surrender himself to God. The results of religious transformations or conversions, instead of being passing, are often lifelong. Habits are revolutionized and lives transformed. There are no known limits to the power of a real religious renewal of character. All this is as unlike the characteristics of suggestion as anything can be, and the easy way of describing religious experience as nothing but sheer suggestion has little to commend it in the eyes of serious students.

Much the same applies to another facile guess. The idea of God, according to some psycho-analytic writers and others, is a 'projection' of man's own desires. It is not a deliberate invention, but an unconscious creating of an imaginary Being to fulfil a need, just as children sometimes create imaginary playmates and endow them with the qualities of actual existence, until at last they veritably believe in them. Sometimes this explanation relies on the idea of a protecting father,

and rather quaintly imagines the simple savage, finding himself thrust out into an unfriendly world, inventing the idea of a protecting father God, built upon the pattern of the father who protected his infancy !

This sort of thing is very easy to say and very hard to prove. We can only provisionally and hypothetically reconstruct the steps by which early man reached the idea of God, but it is badly damaging to this type of theory to recognize that the most primitive type of deities are least like the kindly, protecting father, and are conceived far more often as thwarting than as favouring man's desires. It is probably much nearer the truth to say that primitive man got his ideas about the gods from the awe-inspiring phenomena of nature, and that his main reason for approach to them was to propitiate or conciliate them.

But, apart from this, supposing that it were true that God is the expression of man's desire, does it follow that therefore He has no actual existence ? If we say that God is conceived by man's thought or reason, we do not conclude that therefore He does not exist. We say that our thought has the power of grasping reality, and that, though our ideas of God proceed from our own mind, they represent something that is independent of our minds. Exactly the same may be true of our desires. In the world of the instincts and impulses there is no physical desire that does not refer to something that is attainable. Does any animal ever seek something that does not exist ? Why, then, imagine that, whilst every desire of the body is capable of satisfaction, the desires of the mind can be directed to phantoms ? It may indeed be true that every deep universal desire of man has some reality, somewhere in existence, which corresponds to it. Those who say that God represents man's desire, take an entirely illegitimate step when they follow this assumption with the further assumption that this implies God does not

exist except in that desire. They overlook the possibility that the great, deep-set desires of mankind may indicate to them the character of reality just as much as we believe man's reasoning does. But such a question cannot be settled upon psychological grounds. Psychology's province is with the workings of mind. It cannot say what is the relation of mind to a reality other than itself. That is a metaphysical question that the descriptive science of psychology has no business ever to entertain.

We pass on to another type of theory that disputes the right to refer religious experience to God. Certain sociologists, particularly of the French school, claim that that to which all religious experience refers is society. Society has bred man and fed man, has protected him and provided for him. The group instincts make him cling to society. Without it he would perish. But, with strange perversity, man has persisted in attaching the functions which society really exercises for him, and the sentiments he owes to it, to a supernatural order, to gods or God. Religion, say these writers, is a genuine and necessary expression of the life of humanity. Its purpose is to teach man to live, to aid him in the struggle for existence, but religion, without man's knowing it, refers not to God, but to society.

One is tempted to remark that it is fortunate that this 'truth' has not been known, for it would have abolished religion, which, these savants have assured us, is so very needful and salutary to social organization. The community has never been able to attach to itself the sentiments of religion. Patriotism is one thing; religion another. When Roman emperors were deified by imperial order, a deliberate attempt was made to attach religious feelings to those of patriotism, and strengthen the State by the erection of a religious sentiment around it. The attempt, even

with all the power of imperial Rome to back it, collapsed. It could do no other. It is impossible that man should find satisfaction for his religious feelings in worship of the State.

The reason is not far to seek. Because primitive religion is social in its expression, an affair of the community, it is presumed that the community originated it. That is a complete misreading of the case. The roots of religion lie in that which Otto has called the ' numinous,' in the mysterious, supernormal aspect of life. For that reason the community cannot be the object of religious sentiment. Comte and the Positivists deliberately attempted to make it such, and Positivism is dead and almost forgotten. It failed as completely in practice as in theory. Man was invited to recognize and accept the religion of humanity, and the response proves either that the notion of religion referring to society is a fiction, or, if true, that mankind is quite incapable of recognizing the truth when put before it.

There is not time to enter into the other arguments offered to show that the explanation of religious experience needs no reference to God, but practically all fall under one or other of the two types of theory which we have discussed—namely, that religion is an expression of man's own nature, or the effect of society upon the individual. The first kind of theory may be left to psychology to criticize, but, even if it is more adequate than most expressions of it seem as yet to be, it still cannot have any final bearing on the question whether this expression of man's nature must be taken to refer to the Author of that nature. The second type of theory is as artificial an explanation as ever issued from academic walls.

We take it, then, that the various views put forth by the critics of religious experience provide no satisfactory explanation of it, offer nothing to make us

hesitate in our belief that it is indeed a communion between the human soul and God. This, indeed, does not prove it to be such, and some will ask what proof we can afford.

Everything depends on what one means by proof. If it means a demonstration to convince every one, whether he has or has not ever shared in such an experience, it cannot be given. But it is not alone in this. If any one insists that our sense of beauty, the message of music, or our deepest moral convictions are just chance productions of man's evolution, that they refer merely to the peculiarities of the make-up of the majority of men, and that they belong in no sense to the order of things ultimately real, there are no means by which he can be demonstrated to be wrong. But to most of us these are the most 'real' things in life ; and if reality excludes all these things, it is an empty and meaningless term. Love is real to those who love, but it is not a thing that can be demonstrated. It is real when it is known, not otherwise. So too with religious experience.

Remember, moreover, that religious experience belongs to the whole race of mankind. As far back as history can trace, man has raised his hands in prayer to some Power above him. Religion has been the constant inspiration of the whole development of man. Forms, beliefs, creeds, have come and gone ; religion remains. If man's religion has been nothing but a phantom of his own imagination, it has not been merely the most gigantic blunder of history, it has been the most pitiful tragedy of existence. If mankind as a whole, from primitive man to the greatest and noblest minds the world has known, have all been deluded in believing that there is an unseen order with which they have had touch, can we put any faith in mankind's ability to know what is ultimately true or false ? It is no light thing to doubt the verdict of humanity as

a whole. It may be said that belief in magic has been almost as widespread in the world's history, and that this is false. Yet is that a parallel? In early times magic and religion mixed freely. Yet as far back as the days of the Hebrew prophets, men of insight saw the vanity of magic. To-day the educated world repudiates it. Religion remains. Moreover, even magic was not sheer imagination. At least it witnessed, even in a confused way, to man's sense of an invisible, mysterious order, that same order to which religion clearly and coherently refers.

This way of looking at the matter cannot be called upon to prove the truth of the various beliefs in which religious experience has been embodied. They must be tested by other means. But it does show good cause why we should accept the fact that the overwhelming experience of mankind from earliest times, and still undiminished, cannot be a gigantic delusion with no objective reality behind it, or at best a gross mistake that confused society with God—a mistake that man has refused persistently to rectify, even when the theorists demonstrated it to him.

Whence, then, comes proof? The answer is that religion is one of the ultimate things of life, and all ultimate things are proved by experience, not by logic. One of my former students, writing to me lately, after great bereavement, said that the doctrine of immortality had always been to him, during college days, the hardest of all to believe, but that it was so no longer. He was finding what we all find, that life is the test of our theories, and under that test some collapse, some are demonstrated. Who can tell us what life is? But we do not ask, for we live. Who can tell us what thought is? But we do not ask, for we think. There was a time when man 'knew' what matter was, but he does so no longer. Matter, for modern science, is electricity, and electricity is not a

'thing' at all. What it is only God knows. Yet the material world, whatever it may be, is real enough to experience. All life's ultimate aspects are known at last resort only by experiencing them, not by thinking them out.

So with religious experience. In it we touch reality at a point where no other side of our experience touches it. The proof comes in the experience, and in keeping touch: the doubt that is silenced and whispers again and again 'Is it true?' is not exorcised by argument. It is like the doubt of the lover, whose very ardour itself creates mistrust whether such rapture can remain, whether such perfection can really be so. That doubt is answered by fresh touch with the beloved one, and as the communion grows and develops, the doubt dies, lost in the unshakable certainty of experience. If religion implies anything at all, it implies a personal relation, a relation to be understood on the analogy of the communion which exists between human souls, and the way of certainty is the same for both. We have been discussing to-day religion from the theoretical side, but the proof we seek is not found in the discussions of the lecture-room. It comes in the quiet of the sanctuary, where the soul keeps tryst with God.

ERIC S. WATERHOUSE.

HYMN :

PEACE, doubting heart ! my God's I am :
Who formed me man, forbids my fear ;
The Lord hath called me by my name ;
The Lord protects, for ever near ;
His blood for me did once atone,
And still He loves and guards His own.

When, passing through the watery deep,
I ask in faith His promised aid,
The waves an awful distance keep,
And shrink from my devoted head ;
Fearless their violence I dare ;
They cannot harm, for God is there.

Still nigh me, O my Saviour, stand !
And guard in fierce temptation's hour ;
Hide in the hollow of Thy hand,
Show forth in me Thy saving power,
Still be Thy arms my sure defence,
Nor earth nor hell shall pluck me thence.

When darkness intercepts the skies
And sorrow's waves around me roll,
When high the storms of passion rise
And half o'erwhelm my sinking soul,
My soul a sudden calm shall feel,
And hear a whisper—Peace ; be still !

LET US PRAY for all souls in doubt, bewilderment, and disillusionment.

Almighty Father, who in the afflictions of Thy people art Thyself afflicted, and art full of compassion and tender mercies, hear us as we pray for those who are hurt and hindered by a doubt's pain that will not let them rest in the hope of their calling, and for all who have lost the joy of Thy salvation.

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

For those who dwell in darkness and have no light, for all who must bear their burdens of misgiving and unfaith alone ; and for all who, being over-sensitive, condemn themselves whom Thou dost not condemn.

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

For all who have ceased to pray for themselves and have no consolation from the prayers of others ; for all who have forgotten Thee, and for those who fear at times that Thou hast forgotten them.

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope and in the power of the Holy Ghost.

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort ; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

This, this is the God we adore,
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend ;
Whose love is as great as His power,
And neither knows measure nor end.

'Tis Jesus, the First and the Last,
Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home ;
We'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come.

BENEDICTION :

Now the God of all grace who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after we have suffered awhile, make us perfect, stablish, strengthen us. To Him be glory and dominion for ever. Amen and Amen.

VI

THE ETHICAL IDEAL OF METHODISM —PERFECT LOVE

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It is frequently assumed that Methodism is and is content to be solely a 'religion of emotion.' A distinguished and friendly critic has asserted that 'the Evangelical Revival had no ethical originality,' 'that in its moral aims and achievements it has proved to be seriously defective,' that, 'as yet it has done very little to give us a nobler and more Christian ideal of practical life.' The peril to which this criticism points only serves to heighten the present responsibility of Methodism to give arresting and authoritative expression to the ethical efficiency of evangelical religion.

In view of the pressing and bewildering conditions of the social order of the world, no Christian community presents a more practical ideal for human life and service than that expressed in John Wesley's definition of Christian Perfection in terms of Perfect Love—Love toward God and toward man. Such love is the only dynamic for Christian fellowship. In the truest sense it must be social. The immediate obligation of a united Methodism is to demonstrate within the new world order in which our gospel must be lived as well as preached, that we possess and are possessed by the creative and dynamic forces for which social idealists of many types are wistfully looking. Efficient ethical originality and evangelical fervour constitute a unity urgently demanded of 'organized' religion.

HYMN :

LORD, I believe a rest remains
To all Thy people known,
A rest where pure enjoyment reigns,
And Thou art loved alone :

A rest, where all our soul's desire
Is fixed on things above ;
Where fear, and sin, and grief expire,
Cast out by perfect love.

O that I now the rest might know,
Believe, and enter in !
Now, Saviour, now the power bestow,
And let me cease from sin.

Remove this hardness from my heart,
This unbelief remove ;
To me the rest of faith impart,
The sabbath of Thy love.

I would be Thine, Thou know'st I would,
And have Thee all my own ;
Thee, O my all-sufficient Good !
I want, and Thee alone.

Thy name to me, Thy nature grant ;
This, only this be given :
Nothing beside my God I want,
Nothing in earth or heaven.

READING OF THE SCRIPTURES :

'Love's Perfection' – – – – 1 Cor. xiii.

LET US RECALL the Ideal which Jesus sets forth for His disciples :

Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.

Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.

Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness : for they shall be filled.

Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy.

Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

Blessed are the pure in heart : for they shall see God.

Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called the children of God.

Grant us this grace, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake : for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Write these words in our hearts, we beseech Thee, O Lord.

BRIEF PRAYER.

I

THE DIVINE IDEAL FOR THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN

Let me begin by reminding you that the Christian ideal is not to be defined in purely ethical terms. To begin with ethics is to begin at the wrong end. Our first task is to get right with God. Once we are in filial fellowship with Him we bring forth the fruit of the Spirit, not because we must or ought, but because we are 'partakers of the divine nature.' As Luther said, No one ever dreams of saying that the sun ought to shine. The sun shines because it is the sun, and it is its nature to shine. So if we are in living fellowship with God in Jesus Christ, we shall spontaneously bring forth the ethical fruits of the gospel.

It has been part of the witness of Methodism to assert that there are no limits to the Christian man's possibilities of moral advance. May I remind you that this idea was not an original discovery, but a re-discovery on the part of John Wesley? Methodism is in the line of the original Christian tradition, and the truth which Wesley proclaimed is to be found in St. Paul. The great apostle teaches that there is a state possible to Christians in the present life in which they are hallowed through and through in every part of their being. It is realizable by a definite act of faith, and it is not the same thing as absolute moral perfection.

This experience has been called Christian Perfection, or Sinless Perfection, or Perfect Love. Wesley did not contend for the term 'Sinless Perfection,' and, for myself, I would not use either the term 'sinless' or

the term 'perfection.' They are both open to misconception. The best term is Wesley's favourite term, 'Perfect Love.'

Wesley claims that this experience involves the destruction of 'inbred sin.' But what exactly does 'inbred sin' mean? Psychologists hold that the most important features in the structure of the mind are the inherited *instincts*. They say that 'the instinctive impulses determine the ends of all activities, and supply the driving power by which all mental activities may be sustained.' A man can no more free himself from the action of his instincts than he can alter the life-processes of his body. But he can gain an increasing knowledge and mastery of them.

I do not think that it would be possible to classify the instincts as simply good and bad. They are more properly described as neutral. They may be turned in a good or in a bad direction. For instance, fear is the basis both of cowardice and of the highest courage. Anger is the source of righteous indignation as well as of vindictive passion. As some one has said, 'Our virtues and our vices have common roots.'

By the elimination of 'inbred sin,' Wesley therefore did not mean the elimination of our instincts, but the experience of power to control them to right ends. For let it be remembered that Wesley did not teach that those who experience Perfect Love are exempt from all temptation. 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.' That means that suggestions to evil from without would have no power over us were it not for the response which they awaken in our own breast. He who has entered into the experience of Perfect Love would not be conscious of temptation if there were no response within him to evil suggestions from without. It follows from this that his instincts are not all sublimated, and that he is still conscious of conflict.

I think it is far more probable that by 'inbred sin' Wesley meant a racial defect of will. The question which faces us is, Can the grace of God so remedy this defect that it shall never reappear? The question is one which it is very difficult to answer, and I shall not attempt to dogmatize. Perhaps there is little profit in following up such speculations. Wesley himself denied that a state of absolute sinlessness is possible in the present life. And all the great teachers hedged the word 'Perfection' with so many qualifications that the word is best not used. It is best to speak, with Wesley, of Perfect Love. I am not sure whether, even there, the word 'Perfect' is necessary. Love needs no adjective. The ideal of the christian life is expressed in 1 Cor. xiii. We can pursue that ideal without troubling ourselves with purely speculative questions.

Leaving on one side details of Wesley's teaching, it seems to me that the doctrine can be most helpfully stated to-day if it is taken to mean that *there are no limits to the possibilities of the Christian man's growth in love and grace.* There can be no doubt that too few Christians strive earnestly for growth in grace after their conversion. Many of us settle down comfortably to very mediocre standards.

Kipling has a poem in which he tells of a man who was refused admission to heaven because he was not good enough, and to hell because he was not bad enough. And I often feel that that is a fair description of many of us professing Christians. We are characterized by a colourless mediocrity.

Wesley pointed the way to higher standards of Christian living. The particular form of his teaching is not nearly so important as the witness which he bore to the infinite possibilities which are open to the Christian man, through the Grace of God in Jesus Christ.

What does Perfect Love mean? Love is a very vague

term, and may easily become a mere shibboleth. We are only on the fringe of learning what love, in its higher senses, means. I am speaking of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, and to answer the question we must know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. There is only one way to that kind of knowledge. That is fellowship with Christ, which means that we must give ourselves seriously to the life which is hid with Christ in God.

But what are we to make of Wesley's assertion that the experience of Perfect Love may be entered into instantaneously? I believe that there is a good deal of truth in it.

There is ample evidence that a Christian man who has lived in close fellowship with Jesus Christ, seeking to know and to do His will, may arrive at an hour of surrender and spiritual exaltation and vision, in which there come to him a new comprehension of the meaning of the Christian life and a new sense of the infinite resources of power that are available to him in Christ Jesus. In such an hour a man may feel that there is power enough available to enable him to trample all his sins and temptations under his feet, and from that hour he may be triumphant as he has never been before.

> Tasks in hours of insight will'd
> May be thro' hours of gloom fulfill'd.

In an hour of spiritual vision and exaltation a man may consecrate himself to new spiritual tasks, and, by means of the resources of strength of which he becomes conscious in that hour, he may fulfil the tasks through the hours when the sun does not shine so brightly.

Only I would not limit these hours of insight and consecration to one. The high levels are only maintained by a constant recurrence of these 'moments on the mount,' though it may be that one may stand out more clearly in memory than others.

Let me add in closing that the doctrine of Perfect Love has a *social application* which is very appropriate to the present age. Wesley always emphasized that we are called to love our neighbours as well as God. The purpose of the gospel is to sanctify every sphere and relationship of human life. But here again Perfect Love needs to be interpreted. One of the most urgent needs of the time is for Christian men to think and work out the implications of love in social and industrial relationships. It is not an easy task, but Christians have had to face similar tasks in the past. For instance, up to four or five hundred years ago great difficulty was experienced with the idea of *freedom*. Men did not know how to apply this great idea to the common life. It seemed to them as though any attempt to apply it in earnest must necessarily lead to anarchy and licence. But, from the time of the Reformation, Christian men set themselves to work out its implications. The problem was not solved all at once, or by one man. It took centuries of thinking and experiment before a stable answer was reached. Gradually, however, the idea was realized in the spheres of politics, thought, worship, and industry. Doubtless the bounds of freedom will be widened still further, but we now know in the main what freedom is, and how it is to be applied to all sorts and conditions of men. And, in the same way, we must set ourselves to work out the implications of love to our neighbour. What does it actually mean in the common relations of everyday life? We shall not reach a complete answer in a generation. It may take us centuries. Only those who have the love of God in their hearts can lead us to a complete answer. God grant that in the coming days the Methodist Church may prove to be the great exponent and exemplifier of Perfect Love in the social relations of life.

To sum up, there are no limits to the Christian man's

possibilities of growth in character and advance in conduct. The power of God in Jesus Christ is more than sufficient for all our needs. We ought, therefore, not to be content with mediocrity, but should press on to bring ourselves and society into fuller conformity with Perfect Love.

H. Maldwyn Hughes.

SILENCE.

LET US STAND and affirm together the present possibilities of our life in Christ, in whom it hath pleased the Father to make all fullness to dwell, that out of his fullness we may receive grace for grace.

In Christ I am one with Divine Power.

I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me : who hath promised : ' My grace is sufficient for thee ; for my power is made perfect in weakness.'

In Christ I am one with the Love that understands and forgives ; because the Love of God hath been shed abroad in my heart through the Holy Ghost, which was given unto me.

In Christ I am one with the Peace of God which passeth all understanding.

In Christ I am one with His more abundant life—the life which is life indeed.

In Christ I am one with His purity and patience, with His wisdom and joy.

In Christ I am one with His Spirit of Service, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, who went about doing good.

LET US KNEEL, exercising the prayer of faith which laughs at impossibilities and cries, ' It shall be done.'

I want Thy life, Thy purity,
Thy righteousness, brought in ;
I ask, desire, and trust in Thee,
To be redeemed from sin.

Grant us now this grace, O Lord.

Anger and sloth, desire and pride,
This moment be subdued !
Be cast into the crimson tide
Of my Redeemer's blood !

Grant us now this grace, O Lord.

Saviour, to Thee my soul looks up,
My present Saviour Thou !
In all the confidence of hope,
I claim the blessing now.

Grant us now this grace, O Lord.

'Tis done ! Thou dost this moment save,
With full salvation bless ;
Redemption through Thy blood I have,
And spotless love and peace.

Grant us now this grace, O Lord.

HYMN :

LORD, in the strength of grace,
With a glad heart and free,
Myself, my residue of days,
I consecrate to Thee.

Thy ransomed servant, I
Restore to Thee Thy own ;
And, from this moment, live or die
To serve my God alone.

II

THE CREATIVE IDEAL IN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

In discussing the ethical implications of Wesley's teaching at this Bristol Congress, one cannot but remember that it was in this city, in August 1739, that Wesley had a conversation with one of the famous ethical theorists of history : I mean, of course, the then bishop of the diocese, Joseph Butler. They did not talk specifically on the science of ethics, nor as a theorist about conduct would Wesley have been a match for Butler. Nevertheless, I am going to suggest at the outset that, great as was the mind of Butler, and lasting as was the service he rendered to religious thought and life, Wesley, by his doctrine of perfect love as the ideal of conduct, was nearer to the solution of the moral problem.

Butler was really an individualist in ethics. True, he allows that there are social impulses in human nature ; but he distinguishes them from other impulses which exclusively concern the self. He never relates self-love and benevolence. In fact, he leaves this duality of interests to become a dualism that can never be resolved or reconciled. Conscience, of which he speaks so eloquently, is left helpless. As an authority, it sits apart from the rest of human nature, and can never say where self-love should stop and benevolence begin.

As I understand Wesley's ethical teaching, derived as it confessedly is from the New Testament, there is

no question of a dualism as between the love of self and the love of neighbour. The two are unified in one regard which embraces the interests of both. There is no love of self which is detached from a love of neighbour, nor a love of neighbour which is independent of a love of self. There is but one love, with, however, a dual reference. Otherwise expressed, Christian love is neither egoism nor altruism, but communal affection.

Such, briefly speaking, is Wesley's doctrine in technical terms. And it is the Christian ideal of life. We do not teach Wesley's doctrine merely because it is Wesley's ; nor do we advocate it simply because it is a tenet of Methodism. To do so would be uncatholic. We maintain perfect love as the ideal of conduct because we believe it to be the teaching of the New Testament.

Nevertheless, Wesley, in a letter dated August 1776, refers to it as ' the peculiar doctrine committed to our trust ' ; and in a letter written from Bristol, September 15, 1790, calls entire sanctification—which is an equivalent for perfect love—' the grand *depositum* which God has lodged with the people called Methodists, for the sake of propagating which chiefly He appeared to have raised us up.'

While, therefore, the idea of Christian perfection is as old as the New Testament itself, Wesley conceived it to be his specific duty to revive the doctrine and to rescue it from certain historic errors. An inveterate mistake has been to regard it as a merely individual attainment of ethical superiority. Those who claimed such superiority inevitably fell into the deadly sin of spiritual pride. In order to safeguard the conception, Wesley in a letter from Liverpool, dated April 12, 1782, gave the following advice to his correspondent : ' Frequently read and meditate on 1 Cor. xiii. . . . This is the true picture of Christian perfection ! What

is it more or less than humble, gentle, patient love?' In an earlier note, dated August 1768, he had defined it as 'loving God with all our heart and our neighbour as ourselves.'

A doctrine so scriptural ought not, you would think, to have provoked opposition, especially among those who claim to reverence the Bible. And yet, strange to say, in Scotland of all places, a member of the Methodist society in Edinburgh made objection to a preacher in the following terms (June 17, 1779): 'You must not preach such doctrine here. The doctrine of perfection is not calculated for the meridian of Edinburgh.' Was it that the speaker took a pessimistic view of the human nature of his brother Scots?

Nor does it fall within the scope of my specific subject to deal with the theological aspects of the doctrine; with such questions, for instance, as that of final perseverance; whether the experience of perfect love is instantaneous, or gradual; if instantaneous, whether a definite moment can be assigned to its realization; whether there is any sense in which the experience can be said to be sinless, and yet be compatible with that continual penitence which Wesley insisted was always necessary. These, of course, are important questions, to which Wesley himself did not always give consistent answers.

Fellowship was one of the essential and authentic features of primitive church life. The first disciples continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and in fellowship. In the eighteenth century, Wesley, too, realized the importance of fellowship as the practical expression of the Christian life. Significantly enough, his converts became 'societies,' and, as one of his hymns puts it, were

> Concentred all, through Jesu's name,
> In perfect harmony.

And they were wont in song to say :

> Touched by the loadstone of Thy love,
> Let all our hearts agree,
> And ever toward each other move,
> And ever move toward Thee.

The early Methodists became as intimate as the members of a family, and as united. But they were united by a spiritual bond. What the implications of that spiritual tie were we must now try to unfold.

The natural man, as we may call him, can achieve many kinds of union with his fellow. There is, for instance, the sex-union of man and woman. But the impulse to this fellowship is, so to speak, automatic and largely independent of the will. Involuntary also in its beginnings is the concord of friends ; they are drawn together by affinities of taste and opinion. People will form ' societies ' on the basis of a common artistic or literary enthusiasm. An enthusiasm for Browning creates a Browning Society. Students of science, literature, or philosophy deliberate together, who in other respects are far asunder from each other. In all such cases the basis of union is similarity in intellectual interests.

A modern city is a great assemblage of people in one place and has a kind of community life. But, because they agree to administer in common the tram-cars, parks, reservoirs, and gasometers, they need not, and often do not, do this for any other reason than that it is a mutual convenience. As taxpayers of the same country we meet together in the precincts of a post-office, but we do not therefore find it a trysting-place of brotherhood.

Clubs, guilds, associations, cities, nations unite people in virtue of particular interests, and develop in their members different degrees of sociality. Christian fellowship, however, welds men together, not by a

bond external to their will, but by personal constraint —a constraint of the will as such. It is essentially voluntary or *thelemic*. Spiritual love, being a matter of the will, aims at a union of wills or persons irrespective of sex, culture, station, race, or colour. It loves man as man.

So Christian fellowship knows nothing of sex-inequality. Indeed, it is supersexual, because, where there is a union of souls as such, ' sense is dumb ' and ' flesh retires.' Brethren and sisters who are one in the Lord realize a mystical solidarity which forges unity out of difference. Christian love also goes far beyond the particularism of friendship, and finds in *every* man its affinity. Moreover, it transcends and yet reconciles all those distinctions made by degrees of culture in art, science, literature, and philosophy ; so much so that learned and simple, who in some respects may be far apart, share with each other a fundamental sympathy which withstands every disintegrating influence. Such love, again, scorns distance ; it crosses every national barrier, and bridges the chasm of race and of colour. In short, it aims at brothering all the souls on earth and at turning mankind into a household of God.

In the second place, Christian love, besides being *thelemic* or voluntary, is, as its designation implies, *religious in its inspiration.* Wesley himself insisted that it is always wrought in the soul by faith. The content of such faith is the truth that all are children of the one divine Father, and that through Jesus Christ all who believe form a society of the redeemed. Now the realization that we and our fellow Christians are not only creatures sustained by a Creator, but also sinners dependent upon a Saviour, gives a unique quality to Christian love—the joy contained in it is blent with sorrow, and its adoration is built upon a foundation of penitence. Hence, strange though it

may seem to some, while very true to others, there are tears in love. That hymn strikes an authentic note which says :

> Love and grief my heart dividing,
> With my tears His feet I'll bathe ;
> Constant, still, in faith abiding,
> Life deriving from His death.

In genuine Christian fellowship humility is always present. True to the teaching of the first Beatitude, the members of the brotherhood are ' poor in spirit.' Aristotle's ' great-souled man ' was destitute of this quality. He would do kindnesses, but was ashamed to receive them lest he should seem inferior. He must be under no obligation to others, but must rather seek to place others under obligation to him. How far away is all this from Christian love ! To a Christian all alike are under obligation to a Higher than themselves, and are perforce recipients. The pride that cannot bear to receive anything suffers from a ridiculous misunderstanding. Because their fellowship is based upon the reception of heavenly grace, Christians are ' poor in spirit,' and become a society, at any rate, of mutual receivers. Where all are alike dependent for their very status on divine help, they find it only natural to help each other. Quite characteristically they sing :

> Help us to help each other, Lord,
> Each other's cross to bear,
> Let each his friendly aid afford,
> And feel his brother's care.

I have met with some Christians who, because they claimed to have passed beyond the need of help, remind me of Aristotle's ' high-minded ' man. They averred that their will was so devoted that in their case no ' cross ' ever existed, or could exist ; and that sin was

to them a complete anachronism. All I wish to say about this attitude is that it takes an unusually optimistic view of human nature ; also, that it is opposed to the teaching of Wesley, who insisted on the need for continual penitence. Christian fellowship keeps itself healthy by living in the atmosphere of the first Beatitude and retaining humility.

The fact that a true Christian society is a society of mutual help brings me to my third and last point, which is that Christian fellowship is thoroughly *practical*. We have already implied that it means a perfectly sympathetic community in which joys and sorrows are shared. Now the thoroughness of this sympathy is threatened, in our day at least, by various kinds of inequalities among the members of the fellowship. There is, as a matter of fact, grave inequality in respect of culture and of wealth, to take only two instances. It is the fashion of the natural man to maximize rather than to minimize these differences. This class-consciousness tends to creep into the Church, and is liable to affect both individual Christians as well as entire denominations. Class distinctions seem to depend on differences in dress, in housing, in diet, in mental equipment and education. Now, Christian love, confronted by these differences, first of all remembers that a house, food, dress, and culture are, in any case, only of instrumental value : they are nothing more than means to the best life, and are not that best life itself. So when there comes into the assembly ' a poor man in vile raiment,' who may not be able to read, and who may either sing out of tune or prefer the wrong tunes, the menace to perfect sympathy is countered by the thought that the worth of a soul is immeasurably more precious than anything else that we call good. Appreciation of the things of the spirit should make us able, where necessary, to worship in a barn or a street, and join in the singing

of crude music to doggerel verse. Especially when it is further remembered that class distinctions depend so largely on mere accidents, such as those of a helpful or unhelpful heredity. Culture frequently depends also on having access to wealth whereby in early life one may secure a good education. But the possession of wealth itself often depends on favourable accidents. Of course, not every one is born with a good brain ; but many of those who are are penalized by unfriendly circumstances. Now, Christian love is ever aflame with the passion for mutual help. It is keen to smooth out the avoidable inequalities of life, and to secure for each one equity of opportunity. I do not say ' equality ' of opportunity, for the simple reason that inequalities of mental and physical endowment require variety of opportunity. Each one *serves* the brotherhood according to his ability, and *receives* according to his need. So we aim to improve one another's physical, economic, intellectual, and artistic well-being, that each one may be the better equipped for service to God and man. If our proposed Methodist Union is to be a success, it will be because we delight to supply each other's lack, and share each other's gifts and grace.

Thus did the love of the first Christians express itself. Being of one heart and soul, they felt that the logic of that spirit of community inferred a community in possessions. In the Epistle of Barnabas the logic is made explicit, as the following quotation shows :

' If ye are partakers in common of things which are incorruptible, how much more . . . of those things which are corruptible ? ' I need scarcely add that the attempt to establish economic Communism w th-out a spiritual Pentecost would be disastrous. Russian Communism, for example, which has abjured religion, is unable to carry on without secret police. To the follower of Jesus, material things have no inherent value, nor is life in a body an end in itself. True life

is life in the spirit, and this is a life of love, the love of God in the service of man. Jesus condemns the rich when they abuse the instruments of love, and pities the poor because they lack them. So practical, then, is Christian love that in the interests of the higher life of the spirit it would simply reconstruct civilization.

The foregoing is a brief study in outline of Christian fellowship as a creative ideal. Unfortunately, it cannot be said that the Church of Christ has lived up to the ideal otherwise than in a few of its representatives and for a brief period. And the realization of the ideal in our modern world, even among Christians, can come in its fullness only gradually, as the spirit of Christian love permeates that sub-Christian society with which the Christian is in so many ways inextricably involved. Nevertheless, it is such an ideal that the Christian Church must strive with as much consistency as possible to hold up before humanity. For we live in a sad and sorry world. 'Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn.' War fills the cemeteries of the earth with millions of the untimely dead. Even in eras of so-called peace the incessant economic and social conflict shortens the span of life in the otherwise healthy, and fills our hospitals, asylums, and almshouses. To a cold, suspicious, jealous, and struggling world Christian fellowship offers a life of love, joy, and peace in the Holy Spirit.

E. W. Hirst.

HYMN :

TRY us, O God, and search the ground
Of every sinful heart ;
Whate'er of sin in us is found,
O bid it all depart !

When to the right or left we stray,
Leave us not comfortless ;
But guide our feet into the way
Of everlasting peace.

Help us to help each other, Lord,
Each other's cross to bear,
Let each his friendly aid afford,
And feel his brother's care.

Help us to build each other up,
Our little stock improve ;
Increase our faith, confirm our hope,
And perfect us in love.

Up into Thee, our living Head,
Let us in all things grow,
Till Thou hast made us free indeed,
And spotless here below.

Then, when the mighty work is wrought,
Receive Thy ready bride ;
Give us in heaven a happy lot
With all the sanctified.

PRAYER :

O Thou, who art the living Head of Thy Church, whose Presence creates the true fellowship of Thy disciples, we pray Thee that Thou wilt bind us who confess Thee before men in the bond of perfectness which is love. May we love one another with a pure heart fervently. Enable us to bear one another's burdens and so to fulfil Thy law. Hallow our blessings that they may not fail to bless others through us. Save us from each and every sin against the brotherhood, especially from self-assertion and love of ease. Keep back Thy servants also from all presumptuous sins, from pride of place and personal ambition. Dwell among us in Thy risen power, that we may know the fellowship of Thy sufferings and the joy of those who live not unto themselves but unto Him who died for them and rose again. Amen.

III

THE SOCIAL DYNAMIC AND THE METHODIST MOVEMENT

I

The ethical ideal of the Methodist movement was and is the ideal of essential Christianity. The tremendous impact of the Methodist message and experience on the life of the eighteenth century was the result, not of a new discovery, but of a rediscovery, of truth.

In 1743, when the name 'Methodist' was rousing England to curiosity and questioning, John Wesley wrote a pamphlet entitled *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion.* This pamphlet was designed as a reply to the question, 'What is a Methodist?'

Wesley said: 'We see, on every side, either men of no religion at all, or men of a lifeless, formal religion. We . . . should greatly rejoice if by any means we might convince some that there is a better religion to be attained—a religion worthy of God that gave it. And this we conceive to be no other than love; the love of God and of all mankind; the loving God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, as having first loved us, as the fountain of all the good we have received, and of all we ever hope to enjoy; and the loving every soul which God hath made, every man on earth, as our own soul.' He added, quaintly: 'This love we believe to be the medicine of life, the never-failing remedy for all the ills of a disordered world, for all the miseries and vices of men.'

The re-discovery of the Wesleys was that a complete

love of God and man was the soul and substance of religion. Not orthodoxy of opinion, not adherence to Church or caste, not a bare faith in a distant God, but 'the humble, gentle, patient love of God and our neighbour, ruling our tempers, words, and actions.' It was with this 'medicine of life' that he and his fellows set out to remedy 'all the ills of a disordered world.'

II

Great Britain and Ireland in the eighteenth century were part of a world strangely and wildly disordered. Wesley's generation saw recurrent wars with France, Spain, and Austria, and heard the mutterings of civil war in Britain. It witnessed the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution at home, and the full course of the American Revolution on the other side of the Atlantic. The crowds to whom Wesley spoke lived in towns and villages where violence, drunkenness, destitution, and smuggling were rife. Education was the prerogative of the few, and illiteracy general. It was in a land and age whose common life was crude and turbulent that the Methodist pioneers proclaimed perfect love as the Way which God in Christ had thrown open for everybody.

The profound and conscious spiritual change in men and women who entered the Christian Way—usually described to-day as 'conversion'—was the miracle which startled that century. To Wesley's mind, the reality and sincerity of this new-found love of God was to be expressed and discerned by love of neighbour. A true Christian, he urged, would not stop short in the quest for entire sanctification; he would seek a complete experience and expression of love to his Redeemer, and to his fellow creatures. So, after his practical fashion, John Wesley marked out for

his people a code of everyday social service. This was incorporated in the *Rules*, issued in 1743, which affirmed that the 'desire of salvation' should be evidenced, first, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that most generally practised; and, secondly, by being in every kind merciful, doing good of every possible sort, and as far as is possible to all men.[1]

Avoiding the evils most generally practised meant for the Methodist of the eighteenth century—as the *Rules* indicate—refraining from profanity, sabbath-breaking, buying or selling spirituous liquors, quarrelling, buying or selling uncustomed goods, taking unlawful interest, softness and needless self-indulgence, and laying up treasures on earth. Another rule forbade 'borrowing without the probability of paying, or taking up goods without the probability of paying for them.' A woman who was dismissed from the Methodist Society summoned John Nelson, one of the first of Wesley's itinerant preachers, to assign his reason for excluding her. Nelson read the *Rules* in court, and, stopping at this point, said to the judge, 'My lord, this was the reason for dismissing this woman from the Society to which I belong.' 'Good morality, Mr. Nelson,' commented the judge, and called for the remainder of the *Rules*. Then, turning to the court, he said, 'Gentlemen, this is true Christianity.'

What it meant to do good to all men, after the early Methodist fashion, is best illustrated from that vivid contemporary record, the *Journal* of John Wesley. The sick and dying were succoured in body and soul. The foul prisons of the time were persistently visited by the Methodists, who sought out especially the men and women, sometimes even the lads and girls, who

[1] For an application of the *Rules of the Society of the People Called Methodists* to modern social conditions, see the writer's *The Methodist: A Study in Discipleship* (Epworth Press).

were under sentence of death. Wesley records visits to the French prisoners at Knowle, on the south side of Bristol. Funds were raised for poor relief; during the severe frost in Bristol in the winter of 1740, he was enabled to feed at Lawford's Gate 'a hundred, sometimes a hundred and fifty, a day, of those whom we found to need it most.' A dispensary was established in London where physic was given to hundreds of poor folk. The *Journal* notes public collections towards a lending-stock for the poor; loans to purchase tools for workless artisans; the establishment of a knitting-room for women out of work, and the provision of temporary employment for another group in the carding and spinning of cotton. However little Wesley understood children, he valued education, and his schools at Kingswood and elsewhere were pioneer efforts. He set himself to bring knowledge to the thousand, and both by a succession of pamphlets and by the issue of cheap editions of some of the masterpieces of English prose, he became unquestionably one of the greatest teachers of the populace.

In terse English, he directed the Methodist people to take the same way of service. 'Disperse abroad,' he wrote, 'give to the poor; deal your bread to the hungry. Cover the naked with a garment; entertain the stranger; carry or send relief to them that are in prison. Heal the sick; not by miracle, but through the blessing of God upon your seasonable support. Let the blessing of him that was ready to perish, through pining want, come upon thee. Defend the oppressed, plead the cause of the fatherless, and make the widow's heart sing for joy.'

It was much more difficult in the eighteenth century than we can easily realize to-day for the non-official individual to influence public policy. Popular government, as we understand it, did not exist. News travelled slowly. Rumour rather than fact was the

political fare of the multitude. The man in the crowd who listened to Wesley was more likely to learn what was happening in the wars with France, or Spain, or Austria through the press-gang than through the Press. None the less, by sheer moral force, Wesley compelled the England of his day to heed his protests against public wrong, so that—as the historian has come to recognize—the primitive social witness of Methodism became a fountain-head of reform.

Royalist and Tory as John Wesley undoubtedly was in sympathy, a mental revolution would have been necessary to win his assent to our present forms of democratic decision and rule ; yet, by the limitless nature of his appeal, and the boundlessness of his faith in God and his hope for men, he opened the door of social opportunity to disinherited multitudes.

Consider the strength and directness of his moral protests against unrighteousness. He had actually seen negro slavery in America in his early manhood. The movement for its abolition claimed his adherence from the first. His letter to Wilberforce is as fine an example of moral earnestness as the English language can boast. Written but a few days before Wesley's death, it resounds with the note of a tireless courage.

February 24, 1791.

My Dear Sir,—Unless Divine Power has raised you up to be as *Athanasius contra mundum*, I see not how you can go through with your glorious enterprise in opposing that execrable villainy which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God ? Oh ! be not weary in well-doing. Go on in the name of God, and in the power of His might, till even American Slavery, the vilest that ever saw the sun, shall vanish away before it. . . .

That He who has guided you from your youth up may continue to strengthen you in this and all things, is the prayer, dear Sir, of

Your affectionate servant,
JOHN WESLEY.

His relentless attack on the distillers of spirituous liquors is well known. 'In all cases relating to your neighbour, make his case your own,' was his general and reiterated principle. 'We may not gain,' he affirms, 'by hurting our neighbour in his body.'

Therefore [he reasons] we may not sell any thing which tends to impair health. Such is, eminently, all that liquid fire, commonly called drams, or spirituous liquors. It is true, these may have a place in medicine ; they may be of use in some bodily disorders ; although there would rarely be occasion for them, were it not for the unskilfulness of the practitioner. Therefore, such as prepare and sell them only for this end may keep their conscience clear. But who are they ? Who prepare them only for this end ? Do you know ten such distillers in England ? Then excuse these. But all who sell them in the common way, to any that will buy, are poisoners general. They murder His Majesty's subjects by wholesale, neither does their eye pity or spare. They drive them to hell, like sheep. And what is their gain ? Is it not the blood of these men ? Who then would envy their large estates and sumptuous palaces ? . . . Blood, blood is there : the foundation, the floor, the walls, the roof, are stained with blood !

One further application of the code of social duty may be cited. On the eve of the Election of 1747 Wesley wrote and issued *A Word to a Freeholder*. It was an unsparing denunciation of every form of political corruption. Restricted as was the franchise, a certain number of Methodists were voters. Wesley directed them to withstand bribery and corruption ; neither to eat nor drink at the expense of a candidate,

nor to accept, directly or indirectly, favour or money. 'Act as if the whole Election depended on your vote, and as if the whole Parliament depended on that single person whom you now choose to be a member of it.'

III

John Wesley died in 1791. Eighty-eight years later (in 1879), Dr. R. W. Dale, in a lecture on the Evangelical Revival, said : 'There was one doctrine of John Wesley's—the doctrine of perfect sanctification—which ought to have led to a great and original ethical development; but the doctrine has not grown; it seems to remain just where John Wesley left it. There has been a want of the genius or the courage to attempt the solution of the immense practical questions which the doctrine suggests. The questions have not been raised, much less solved. To have raised them effectively, indeed, would have been to originate an ethical revolution which would have had a far deeper effect on the thought and life—first of England, and then of the rest of Christendom—than was produced by the Reformation of the sixteenth century.'

What had happened in those eighty-eight years?

Nationally, the degradation of the lot of the manual workers, which was the fearful accompaniment and consequence of the Industrial Revolution, had at long last aroused the national conscience. It is true that certain of the outstanding pioneers of reform were directly influenced by the Methodist movement and its teaching. Mr. Rattenbury has shown in his recent volume, *Wesley's Legacy to the World*, to how great an extent Wilberforce, Sadler, Oastler, Stephens, Lord Shaftesbury, and other nineteenth-century leaders of social movements drew their inspiration and moral energy from the Methodist message and experience. But within Wesleyan Methodism, in the earlier decades

of the nineteenth century, the doctrine of 'perfect love' found no new public expression. On the contrary, a hardening tendency is traceable.

The Annual Conference, which had succeeded to Wesley's authority, was far more concerned to assert its prerogatives throughout the Wesleyan Connexion than to show an understanding sympathy with the new ethical impulses astir in Britain and the world. As Mr. Rattenbury says, 'Second generations of great movements usually get the perspective wrong, and the founders of great movements are often blamed for the faults of their successors.' It is unquestionable that throughout the first half of the last century, whilst Wesleyans as individuals cherished the spirit of personal benevolence, the official mind of the Wesleyan Connexion regarded with unbending hostility the movements towards a wider social and political freedom. The democratic thinkers in the rank and file of Methodism throughout the country left the 'old body' by hundreds and thousands in the successive disruptions of Methodism which scar the Church history of that period. They found a home and a sphere for ardent religious and social service in the Primitive Methodist, Bible Christian, and Methodist Reform denominations. On the eve of Methodist Reunion, speaking as a Wesleyan, I desire to acknowledge explicitly the vital, fearless, and effective social witness of those groups of Methodist preachers and people who thus severed themselves from the official conservatism of the Wesleyan Connexion, and asserted afresh the spiritual right of every man to love and liberty.

I do not think that attention has been given hitherto to the effect of these successive disruptions on the social witness of Methodism. Wesley had taught that 'the humble, gentle, patient love of God and our neighbour ruling our tempers, words, and actions' was the mark of that Scriptural holiness which the Methodists were

to spread throughout the land. But how could a religious communion rent by internal strife mediate love to the nation? Authority and fellowship easily fall apart, and so it came to pass in Methodism in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The Wesleyan Conference stood for authority One cannot peruse the records of successive Conferences in those stormy years without recognizing that the one note lacking was that of perceptive love. Reformers are sure to be troublesome! Nor are all their claims necessarily wise or timely. But the recourse to bare authority sundered fellowship in the Methodist communion; and successive breaches of fellowship grievously impaired the power of the parent Methodist body to permeate with health-giving love the swiftly-changing life of Britain.

Dr. Dale's comment is, however, subject to this criticism: he failed to take into his reckoning the social services of the Methodists who at that time left the Wesleyan Connexion. Perhaps the outstanding example of their fidelity to Wesley's teaching is that supplied by Sidney Webb in his *Story of the Durham Miners.*

He describes the evil social condition of the average Durham miner of 1821: the absence of civilizing influences; the tyranny, drunkenness, and brutality which marked that period. Mr. Webb continues:

> Into such a community, ignored by the statesmen of the time, and virtually given up as hopeless by cleric and philanthropist alike, there came, between 1821 and 1850, two inspiring influences, Religion and Trade Unionism. First to be named must be the Methodists, notably the humble, unschooled, but devoted 'ranters,' carrying gradually from village to village the gospel of salvation of the Primitive Methodist Church. Very moving is it to read to-day of the tireless efforts of these unlettered, hard-driven, poverty-stricken men, nearly always themselves earning a precarious living as manual working wage-earners, who nevertheless found the time and means,

as they gradually spread from one village to another, to gather together a tiny congregation, and to establish a humble meeting-place, which eventually became a chapel.

No one can doubt—it would, indeed, be hard to over-estimate—the enormous improvement which has been wrought by the Methodists in their century of persistent effort in all parts of the county. What they aimed at was primarily the salvation of the soul. But the change of heart which accompanied conversion was habitually marked, though often with backslidings, by a change of life. The Methodist, whatever his shortcomings, became a man of earnestness, sobriety, industry, and regularity of conduct. Family after family became thus transformed, to serve in its turn as a centre of helpful influence. It is these men who, in the mining villages, have stood out as men of character, gaining the respect of their fellows. From the very beginning of the Trade Union Movement among the miners, of the Co-operative Movement among all sections of the wage-earners, of the formation of Friendly Societies and of the later attempts at Adult Education, it is men who are Methodists, and in Durham County especially the local preachers of the Primitive Methodists, whom we find taking the lead and filling the posts of influence. From their ranks have come an astonishingly large proportion of the Trade Union leaders, from checkweighers and lodge chairmen up to county officials and committee-men. They swarm on Co-operative and Friendly Society committees. They furnish to-day, in the county, most of the working-class Justices of the Peace, and Members of the House of Commons.

In like manner the Bible Christians in the Western counties were faithful witnesses of social virtue and veritable pioneers of Temperance reform. The Methodist Free Churches also supplied a notable link of understanding and sympathy between the democratic movements in public life and the passion for freedom and righteousness inherent in the Christian experience.

IV

It was with Hugh Price Hughes that Wesleyan Methodism began to turn again with a renewed understanding of its social implications to John Wesley's doctrine of 'perfect love.' The story of the fifty years since Dale's famous criticism is a far brighter chapter in Methodist history. When Dale delivered his lecture, Hughes was a young man. His intense and eager soul flung itself upon the dullness and staleness of ecclesiasticism. With the veritable zeal of a Hebrew prophet, he preached 'a productive faith' (to recall a kindling phrase from John Wesley's lips), 'a faith productive of good works and holiness.'

Memories of my own youth re-awaken as I picture Hugh Price Hughes in the fighting days of his national ministry. I see him in the Park Hall, Cardiff, reasoning with a mighty throng concerning righteousness, temperance, and the judgement to come. On one unforgettable Sunday I heard him, on his chosen platform at St. James's Hall, London, pleading, persuading, winning a verdict for his Master as Lord of the soul and of the social order. Fearlessly, he sided with the pioneers who were at strife with the drink traffic, or, like W. T. Stead, were challengers of the vice of the great city. Under his leadership a new generation arose, resolved to claim the kingdom of the earth for God, and not His foe. From those brave days to these, there have not been wanting in the parent body of Methodism, men and women who have striven, out of their love of God, to bear witness against oppression in industry and corruption in politics, and to transform the whole domain of human life into a realm of knowledge and beauty, of brotherhood and justice.

So it came to pass that, side by side with the rise of the Labour movement in British politics, Unions of

Social Service were founded in the Methodist denominations, to spread the new knowledge which economics, at last wedded to morality, was accumulating ; to arouse a sense of social obligation for the unprivileged and disinherited ; and to summon Christian citizens to unremitting war against social wrong.

So, too, it came to pass that the Wesleyan Conference, in the closing year of the Great War, unified three of its committees which were in commission against alcoholism, impurity, and the disregard of the Christian Sabbath, and founded its present Department of Temperance and Social Welfare.

So, also, as unity of the Churches has become a watchword in post-war Britain, the social reform forces of Methodism have shared to the full in the common Christian task of winning equity for the nation's workers, and of proclaiming the gospel of reconciliation between classes, parties, and nations. The pacific and constructive intervention of leaders of the Churches in the General Strike, and in the tragic Coal Stoppage of 1926, is a striking example.

V

Finally, what of the relationship of the social ideal of essential Christianity to the transitional age in which our life's work is to be done ?

It is clear from all that has been said that some conceptions of the doctrine of entire sanctification have barely a fractional relationship to the present situation. The idea that the experience of perfect love can be identified with a ' second blessing,' which lifts the recipient, in spiritual quality, above his fellow disciples, perhaps constituting him, in his own judgement, their censor, is still existent ; but it is no guidepost to ' the humble, gentle, patient love of God and our neighbour ' which Wesley proclaimed. Nor, on

the other hand, is political partisanship, even when directed to moral ends, to be regarded as one and the same as the love which 'seeketh not its own.'

The significance of perfect love cannot be stated as a clause in a creed. It is a spirit, renewing and transforming, at whose impact evil withers. It is the gift of God, to be sought by man in humbleness, penitence, and self-surrender. It is a fire in the soul, keeping thought and purpose sensitive to the impress of the Divine Mind, bending and shaping the human will to social and sacrificial action. It can, and does, express itself in every wholesome relationship: in parental care and neighbourly helpfulness; in the vocation of the teacher and writer, the preacher and the healer; in bread-winning by toil of hand or brain; in craftsmanship and artistry; in public service on the local council or in the Mother of Parliaments. It is a steadfast striving after the ideal. It is a progress, in the rich Pauline phrase, 'unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.'

For many, in our age of restless venture and aggressive publicity, the crucial test of the degree of the dominance of divine love in the life of man or woman is the attitude of the individual to possessions, or to prestige.

Does a man hold what he owns as a stewardship, be it little or much, or does it hold him? Does neighbour-love guide him in getting and using money, and in refusing to get money in ways that hurt his neighbour? Does he subordinate his personal interests to the interests of the community—local, national, and racial? The intricate modern problem of money power can be solved only as honest and adequate answers are found to these questions.

Again, is a man willing to serve the present age, actively and ardently, when the people with whom he

has most to do, and for whom he has done most, ignore, oppose, or forsake him? If love is the anchor, it will stand the strain; if self-esteem, the place of service that knew him may know him no more.

It is in face of such moral challenges, rather than in changing emotional experiences, that the depth and degree of divine love are measurable. 'The loving every soul which God hath made, every man on earth, as our own soul' is the standard of Christ-likeness. The more surely this is realized, the more consciously will the Christian disciple feel his need of fellowship with Him who 'pleased not Himself.'

I remember a conversation with a public man, who had entered politics many years before in an idealistic spirit. He had seen so much of personal greed and party rancour, of jealousy and littleness, of the lowering of the ideal in many of his associates, that, as we talked, he acknowledged himself disillusioned. 'After all,' he said, 'is the struggle worth while?' I knew that he had felt the call and power of the Christian Faith in his youth, though in the rush and dust of political campaigning the vision had almost faded. I remember asking him to read again St. Luke's Gospel, as one would read a tale that gripped, and see whether in the reading he felt once more the authentic dynamic for service. Maybe he did so. I know that fresh hope and vigour came to him.

There are many such to-day in public life, wistfully looking for a faith or a companionship that can keep a stressful life kindly, patient, and serviceable: leaderless men, seeking a guide who will neither mislead nor desert; impoverished men, needing resources of the spirit that will not fail. There is but one answer to this intense human longing. The Living Christ is the Lord and Giver of Life in its fullness. He, the Perfect Lover, is the Fount of Perfect Love.

HENRY CARTER.

HYMN :

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down ;
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown :
Jesu, Thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love Thou art ;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy grace receive ;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more Thy temples leave ;
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise Thee, without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish then Thy new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be ;
Let us see Thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored in Thee ;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise !

LET US KNEEL before God, examining our motives, humbly confessing our faults and looking for His promised forgiveness.

SILENCE.

LET US PRAY :

O God our Father, who hast set forth the way of life for us in Thy beloved Son, we confess with shame our slowness to learn of Him, our reluctance to follow Him. Thou hast spoken and called, and we have not given heed. Thou hast stretched forth Thy hands to us through our fellows, and we have passed by. We have taken great benefits with little thanks. We have been unworthy of Thy changeless love.

Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

Forgive us, we beseech Thee, that we have been formal and self-satisfied in our prayers for others, neglectful of fellowship, thoughtless in our judgements, hasty in condemnation, grudging in forgiveness, and especially that so little of Thy love has reached others through us.

Have mercy upon us and forgive us, O Lord.

Most Holy Father, our sins are such as sent our Lord to His cross. We have no ground wherein we can stand before Thee, save the greatness of the mercy revealed in that cross.

Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.

HYMN :

O THOU who camest from above
The pure celestial fire to impart,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
On the mean altar of my heart !

There let it for Thy glory burn
With inextinguishable blaze ;
And trembling to its source return,
In humble prayer and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
To work, and speak, and think for Thee ;
Still let me guard the holy fire,
And still stir up Thy gift in me ;

Ready for all Thy perfect will,
My acts of faith and love repeat,
Till death Thy endless mercies seal,
And make the sacrifice complete.

BENEDICTION :

Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ ; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

VII

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HYMN :

O FOR a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace !

My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honours of Thy name.

Jesus ! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease ;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free ;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.

He speaks, and, listening to His voice,
New life the dead receive,
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
The humble poor believe.

See all your sins on Jesus laid :
The Lamb of God was slain,
His soul was once an offering made
For every soul of man.

READING OF THE SCRIPTURES :

' That they may be one " – – John xvii. 5–11, 20–23

SILENCE.

PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER.

I

THE LOCAL PREACHERS' MUTUAL AID ASSOCIATION

It is my privilege as President of the Association to represent at this Congress 37,000 Methodist local preachers, each of whom claims to have been called of God to proclaim the simple gospel of His grace. We are not called to be orators, or entertainers—or even psychologists. We are called to be witnesses of the sure salvation we have found in Jesus Christ. I am authorized to say that this great company of men —and of women also—is prepared to sustain the Methodist witness, not only in town and village pulpits, but in the open air also. We are prepared to go anywhere. The local preachers of Methodism ask the Methodist people to use them and to stand by them. I believe that, if this cordial co-operation is assured in mutual confidence and goodwill and in the fellowship of earnest, believing prayer, there will be a genuine revival of the work of God in all the Churches. Eighty per cent. of the people of England outside the Churches seems a great problem. It is. But it is also a great opportunity. I am an optimist. Even in such a situation I have confidence in the all-sufficiency of God's grace in Christ. We have a message for the outsider, the same message our Methodist fathers found arresting and attractive. I think I may claim to know the working-men of Lancashire and Yorkshire; and I can assert that they are sick of the arrogant materialism of the day. What they want is what Christ came to give —peace of soul. They are waiting for professing Christians to obey the constraint of the love of Christ and thus to become His witnesses to their neighbours. We can never win others to Christ until we love them and by love serve them.

HARRY DAWSON.

HYMN :

COME, Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace ;
Streams of mercy never ceasing
Call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some celestial measure
Sung by ransomed hosts above ;
O the vast, the boundless treasure
Of my Lord's unchanging love !

Here I raise my Ebenezer ;
Hither by Thine help I'm come ;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God ;
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.

O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be !
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee :
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love ;
Take my heart, O take, and seal it,
Seal it from Thy courts above !

II

METHODISM AND TRADITION

Methodists have always been one people in origin, in tradition, and in purpose. Divided and scattered by the fierce contentions that arose amongst us, yet the same fire glowed in all the fragments, even in those driven farthest from the original body.

I cannot say that the things which divided us were trivial, but I can say that the things which united us were always greater than those that divided us. It is a sign of large mindedness when men can fix their minds on the larger things and overcome their vexations and prejudices by the contemplation of great issues. That is what we have been doing, and it is because we have done it that Union is near.

One of the reproaches cast against Methodism is that Methodists are a factious people delighting in divisions. The typical Methodist is supposed to be a man who cannot endure the discipline of a large church, and so asks for a little chapel of his own that he may rule in it. Gustav Frennsen, in *Jörn Uhl*, tells us of a farmer who, when one of his neighbours' houses caught fire, refused to carry water unless he could be given a little bit of the fire to put out all by himself. That man, many would tell you, might have been a Methodist. But our Union proves we are not a factious people ; we do not love divisions. We end them as soon as we can, and Methodism is not the spiritual home of men who do not know enough of the art of life to live and work with their neighbours.

What is the basis of this Union we are achieving ?

On what ground are we coming together? What is the idea that is ruling us? Some people think we are being driven together by a common fear that if we do not unite we shall perish in separation. Others think a common antagonism to Rome is bringing us together. Neither interest nor hatred are worthy and sufficient bases for Union. Such foundations cannot endure. Others think our Union merely marks a return to tradition, a turning back to the eighteenth century, a desire to rehabilitate the religion of our grandfathers, to dress our minds in their clothes and interlard our talk with their pious phrases. These Methodist witness meetings are suspect. Some people think we are a backward-looking people, that Mr. Aldom French is a reactionary, a Methodist die-hard, and that the three Presidents, schooled to their work, are trying to move in a universe of discourse in which they are really very uncomfortable.

It is said that it has been decided somewhere, and by some powerful and secret body whose hidden hand moves everywhere, that Methodism must be purged from liberal thought, that the united Church must be a Church where tradition weighs more than vision or inspiration ; a Church with a kind of Star Chamber and with Dr. Lofthouse as chief inquisitor. I deny it. We are uniting, not because of common antagonism or common fears or a common desire for safeguards, but because we believe a united Methodism can do more for the Kingdom of God than a divided Methodism can. We are coming together not so much to conserve the past as to serve the future. It is not despair that brings and binds us together. We three Presidents are not three drowning men clinging to a spar called Union.

I want to say a word or two to those who fear that Union will make us a very conservative Church, a Church in which liberal thought will shrivel in a cold

blast. What is it theological liberalism wants? It asks for a restatement of doctrine to meet the demands of the modern mind, a formulation of Christian belief that shall be in harmony with the new knowledge of our day. We are told that our language is out of date; that such a phrase as 'justification by faith' means nothing to the modern man, and we must therefore put the truth in other ways. I agree. No wise man objects to restatement. Truth can be put in more than one way. There is a variety of statement in the New Testament. Justification by faith is simply another way of saying, 'Repent and become as little children that you may enter the Kingdom of Heaven.' Jesus put the truth domestically; Paul put it legally; but the underlying experience is the same. So that we can say to all thinking men that there is no objection to restatement.

And, further, as Methodists we know that the best of our traditions are not opposed to the incoming of new light from any quarter. John Wesley was a forward-looking man. He was a great reader, a profound student. His eager mind delighted in the strong movements of contemporary thought and he was well abreast of the ideas of his time. Dent's edition of his *Journal* gives in its index a list of books read or referred to by Wesley. That list runs to ten columns. And, better still, he went on thinking till his old age. Let me give you an example. When he was sixty-four years of age he was travelling in a coach to Norwich, and, being alone, he began to put down his thoughts about justification by faith. He says that certain things were as clear as day to him: a man might be saved who had no clear conception of justification by faith. That a mystic who denied justification by faith might be saved; then he breaks out, 'What, then, becomes of justification by faith as the article of a standing or falling Church? Is it not better to reject ornate and

big words and to return to the plain word, "He that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him"?'

If that is not restatement of doctrine I do not know what restatement is.

But this leads me to point out something that is often forgotten. Wesley's restatement came out of his experience. He was always testing and reshaping his creed to make it match his experience. It is in experience that all valid restatement of doctrine has its beginning. Dr. Whitehead says, 'Dogma must have experience to work on.' That means you cannot make a theology before you have a religion. Devotion must come before dogma. You must experience religion before you can express it. Until you experience God you have nothing to put down. Only converted men can give us a theology of conversion. Only men who have found that Jesus is to them what God alone can be to their souls can tell us the truth about His divinity. The true expert in religion is not the theologian, but the saint.

Pectus facit theologum. The heart makes the theologian. The only theology worth having comes out of religious experience. Methodism has suffered a great loss in the death of Dr. Peake, and not only Methodism, but Christendom. His work was vital because of the experience behind it. The fountain from which the richest stream of his influence flowed was revealed when men heard him pray. The University did much for him, but the grace of God did more. Such a man could restate doctrine because he had the substance of the matter in him.

Before you can have a new theology you must have a living acquaintance with God. I heard a man say in a Methodist Conference that the time had come to scrap Methodist theology. Did he mean that the time had come to reject as valueless the Methodist

experience of God? For there is an experience enjoyed by Methodists. We have amongst us men and women who know what it is to be reconciled to God in Jesus. This experience is constitutive of Methodism. When it dies, Methodism will die with it. A Church may continue for a time as a social institution after the experience which gave it vitality has perished, but it has only a name to be living, it is really dead.

God's love, man's sin, and the bringing of God and man together in Jesus are three facts of which theology must take account. We cannot allow any one to explain these things away, or to empty them of reality. Methodism is not impatient of restatement of theology, but it is impatient of all attempts to empty experience of meaning, it is impatient of the men who tell us that when we are forgiven we really forgive ourselves, because there is no God to forgive us, that God is a projection of the human mind, that the cleansing of the heart is really a form of mental hygiene, and that, in a word, we are fooling ourselves when we believe that God pardons and absolves all who truly repent and unfeignedly believe His holy gospel.

Our deposit of faith is not a body of dogma, but a living experience of the grace of God. Whoever among us feels called to make the ways of divine mercy clearer to men is free to speak the word the Spirit gives him. God's world is bigger than our little minds; God's love is wider than our measure. We expect fuller light and larger understanding. We are a forward-looking people, and we seek a renewed Methodism to meet the needs of the new age.

R. H. B. Shapland.

LET US STAND and join together in an Act of Thanksgiving for the Divine leading towards Methodist Union, and in united prayer for the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We worship Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, Thou great Head of the Church. We call upon all that is within us to bless Thee for the sure signs of Thy presence amongst the Methodist people, as, meeting in Thy name, they have sought to be bound together by Thy Spirit in the bond of perfectness, which is love, for all the services of Thy Kingdom. We humbly beseech Thee of Thy great goodness, O Lord, that the light and leading of that same Presence may be vouchsafed to all the councils of this people whensoever and wheresoever they may be assembled. So grant that in the humble following of Thy Spirit, in mutual love and forbearance, in reverent discerning of Thy purpose in the raising up of our Methodist fathers, in establishing their work in this and other lands, we, Thy servants here present, seeking not our own, but the things which are Thine, may serve the speedy coming of Thy Kingdom in our own day and generation, to the glory of Thy Holy Name. Amen.

THE DOXOLOGY.

III

METHODISM AND THE CHURCH

This age, like every other, is fertile in complaints about the diminishing power of religion. Religion has ebbed and flowed in every period of its history ; but the present age has witnessed what may well be called five great advances in the cause of religion : the disappearance of the old scientific materialism ; the end of the old fierce conflict between science and religion ; the definite passing of the old individualistic creed, even in economics, 'each for himself' ; the end of the old pagan cry, 'war is inevitable' ; and the end of the attempt to discount all social service as un-Christian, or at least as alien to the real demands of Christianity, based on such texts as 'the poor ye have always with you.' It would be too much to say that all these axioms, as they were once accounted, have been banished into the abode of lost heresies ; they may still be heard, most of them, in places that pass for Christian, as well as where Christianity is frankly scorned ; but few people who have any intellectual reputation to lose would now venture to defend them.

We may go further. We have most of us been accustomed to discussions as to the real nature of what Christianity demanded : Was it being or doing, giving or receiving ? Was it more important to be saved, or to save others ? Now we have come very generally to recognize that it is both being and doing, giving and receiving, being saved and striving to save others ; that it is deep-seated peace and yet at the same time

constant and unremitting struggle. Perhaps we may put it most clearly thus—we are saved through Jesus the Son of God, who was sent to gather us into the family of His Father, there to enjoy a sonship like His own ; and that sonship, being like His, will inevitably involve us in His own strife for those whom He calls His brethren, and breathe into us His own unbroken confidence and joy in His Father.

Now, to say this is to get back very near to John Wesley and the evangelical doctrines which the Methodism he founded spread through the land. What he taught his Methodists to call Scriptural Holiness was something which, though rooted in a mystical experience of salvation, was bound to display itself in a new life, a new kind of conduct, a new morality ; so to say, a super-morality. It should never be forgotten that Wesley had no doctrinal tests for membership in his societies ; he demanded that all who wished to enter them should desire to be saved from their sins ; but he went on at once to say that if such a desire was genuine, it would show itself in a life which spent itself in avoiding every known form of evil, in doing good to all men according to the utmost of one's power, and in attending all the possible and available means of grace.

But though Wesley seemed thus to be setting up a new code of morals, differing only from what had been tried before by its extreme demands, he was really doing far more ; for all that he thus emphasized was to him but the outworking of love. The love of Christ, which had first revealed itself to the sinner and told him of the possibility of being saved from his sins—not simply, be it noted, from the punishment of them ; a very different thing—now took shape and being in the heart of the convert ; it was no more the morality of a slave, however exalted ; it was a joyful obedience, the reproduction of the father's high purpose in the mind of a son. A slave might doubt whether he could

ever satisfy his master ; but no son could really doubt that he was the son of his father, or that his father loved and cared for him, and would do so to the end. The very fact that he was actually living in his father's family would assure to him the spirit of the son, which would remove any such doubts. Hence, Wesley's strong grasp of the essentially Pauline thought of the sonship of the believer through Christ led him straight on to the equally Pauline conception of assurance. Obviously, from such an experience of Christianity, being must go with doing, giving with receiving, saving with being saved.

The country to which Wesley brought this doctrine was very different from the England of to-day. In the earlier half of the eighteenth century, the common people, though by no means entirely godless, lived a life which for the most part was sunk in what we should call brutality ; Hogarth's pictures, for example, show a toleration of pain and dirt and coarseness which we should not endure for an instant. The larger part of the population, too, was illiterate ; had they been able to read books and newspapers, there were none for them to read ; of the outside world they knew nothing ; and if the average Frenchman of the time (as we are told) thought that English people had tails, the Englishman was but little better instructed as to his French neighbour. If we turn to the literature of the time—as represented, for example, by Pope—it was all correctness, point, sparkle ; but no feeling for the spirit, or for the eternal verities ; it was all on the surface ; '*sur tout, pas de zéle*' ('above all, no enthusiasm').

When we turn to the life of our own day, the brutality (as it was tolerated in the eighteenth century) has gone ; the general standard of comfort and of sympathy (however low it may be beneath the Christian's ideal) was probably never so high in these islands, or indeed

anywhere else. The old intellectual narrowness of the mass of the people has gone also; newspapers, cinemas, and cheap novels may not be elevating, but they have destroyed the era of the parish pump. What, however, of the third characteristic of the eighteenth century, the superficiality, and the satisfaction with the 'coldly correct, the faultlessly sublime'? That the life of our days is just as superficial as that of Wesley's day, few would deny. The cult of excitement, which is breaking down or has already broken down the old-fashioned Sunday, the old habits of Bible-reading, and with them a hundred conventions of social life, is one unmistakable symptom of this. The extraordinary enthusiasm for sport, which would have amazed our ancestors, is another. And yet, both in popular newspapers and in the plays and films that attract the masses to-day, there is a curious concentration upon, a preoccupation with, the great moral problems of life; it seems as if it were impossible to get away from the thought of temptation, failure, and sin. True, there is little enough suggestion of the Christian's answer to all this; but that is simply to remind us, surely, that when the question is asked, however dumbly, the Christian ought to have his answer ready.

For what Methodism did to that boorish or over-refined society of the eighteenth century was to teach it to be serious. 'Be serious,' as Wesley said once to a young girl in a house where he stayed, in tones that neither she nor others could forget. But this teaching of seriousness was like a star that had risen elsewhere. You must be serious, said those eager Methodist members, because (to quote Wordsworth, writing when Methodism had had its effect on the century) you are 'travellers between life and death'; because you are sinners, and need a Saviour from 'the death that never dies.' Beneath the superficiality of to-day there lies a sort of seriousness which perhaps goes further than

anything that the roughs of Newcastle or Walsall knew when they gathered menacingly around the pale but resolute preachers. But it is not the seriousness that has just been described. May it be that the task of Methodism, in an age that has looked beneath the surface and has tried to forget what it has seen, is to reveal and enforce the seriousness that transformed the century of its birth?

For it did transform its century. England at the end of the eighteenth century was another country from the England of the beginning. It could greet Wordsworth and Shelley; it could fling itself upon the long and deadly struggle with Napoleon; it could set itself to destroy the slave-trade; and it could be summoned to the great struggle for reform—political, social, and penal—which engrossed the first thirty years of the nineteenth century. It would be too much to say that Methodism was at the back of all these changes; what was at the back of them was that new conception of life, that new refusal to tolerate certain evils, which Methodism had first generated.

This can be seen in another way. Wesley's century was the century of the expansion of England, and of the beginnings of the industrial revolution. By 1760 the British Empire, undreamt of before, had in reality come into being. Before 1800 there had begun that shifting of population into the rapidly growing manufacturing districts of the North which transformed the wild valleys of Lancashire and Yorkshire into roaring huddles of factories and mills. Both these changes constituted an immense call for character. The call was answered. And again we must look to Methodism and the Evangelical Movement for the initial impulse. Whether, as some high authorities have held, England, without the work of John Wesley, would have suffered all the horrors of the 'red fool-fury of the Seine' or not, the England of Walpole, without Wesley and all

that sprang from him, would never have stood the strain, or emerged as the champion of freedom and order. The England of the beginning of the nineteenth century was very far from being a nation of saints ; but it had received something which it was able to give to a world that was in sore need of the gift.

It will now need no great stretch of imagination to see the parallel—alluring but far from exact—between the age of Wesley and our own. And the Methodist who believes in the hand of God as shown in history will ask himself whether there may not be manifested a divine purpose in the fact that, just when this parallel reveals itself, the severed branches of Methodism should be growing again into one. We are being recalled from the divided emphasis of our separated existence into the one message of the early days. The long period of discussion and preparation has been necessary, and indeed inevitable ; but it has had at least one lamentable drawback. It has concentrated our attention on the points wherein we have differed—the minor points. We have forgotten the points where we are all at one—where we are all true to the original ' evangel.' But now we have settled our differences—Legal Hundred, Administration of the Sacraments, and the rest. At last we are free to remember that for which we have always stood. We can set ourselves to ' spread Scriptural Holiness through the land,' in Wesley's practical and yet mystical fashion, without feeling paralysed by the question, ' Then why do you Methodists stand aloof from one another ? ' More than this, if it was given to the Methodism of those days to do something for England which saved her from disaster, may it not be given to a re-united Methodism in these days, learning to speak the old truths, though in a new dialect which this age will understand even better than that age understood the dialect of our grandfathers, to do something that shall ' save ' the society of our day?

Some, if this question is asked them, will at once think of the unsolved social problems, and the new and more Christian spirit that is still at best but weak, either in politics or industry. And they are right. We do not always realize how Wesley himself felt the need for the rebirth of his society. 'The only religion the Bible knows of,' said he, 'is social religion.' And if, to him, 'social' did not mean quite the same as when we speak of the 'social problem,' it did mean that, if any man claimed to be a Christian, he was bound to love his neighbour as himself, and to feel unhappy and unable to rest if he made no effort to share with his needier brethren what he himself was fortunate enough to possess. The world at large cannot escape from the social problem; whatever the Churches do, it is there to be solved sooner or later. But it will only be solved satisfactorily if it is solved in a spirit of sharing; and if this is to be done, the Churches must take their part in the work of solution, and infuse their own spirit into the steps which are chosen and the measures selected. Every great reform in this country has rested for its strength on the broad outlook and the deep conviction and sense of responsibility in Christian men and women; and, if we are to get at the soul of all reform, the breadth of outlook and the depth of conviction that is born of Christian faith must be at the centre of it.

But, after all, that is only to say that what is supremely necessary is a society of men and women who know that they have been taken hold of by the grace of Christ for the service of God, a service which means devotion to the needs of the bodies and souls of all around them; a service to which they are drawn 'with a glad heart and free' because they know they have been saved from enmity with God, which is the real death, by the blood—the very life—of Christ, freely given for them. And this surely is the vital message of

Methodism. And it must be preached, as it always has been preached when it has been preached effectively, by the lives of its adherents. 'By their fruits!' The call of these days of reunion is a call to clear thinking, to a return to the essentials, to fidelity to the old truths, in whatever language we try to make them intelligible to our contemporaries. But, above all, it is a call to ourselves, for a new devotion—self-abnegation. 'If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.' Deny himself: that is, treat himself as if he did not exist; as if he was nothing to himself, as Peter tried to persuade the kitchen-maid that Jesus was nothing to him. That is the test. And the Cross of Christ can mean nothing to us unless we are prepared to take up our own cross, and to take it up in the sense of those words of Jesus. When we have received the power to do that, every other need, intellectual or financial or social, will be supplied.

Let us take up the cross,
Till we the crown obtain;
And gladly reckon all things loss,
So we may Jesus gain.

'For their sakes I consecrate myself.' Such were the words of Jesus when He was on the point of going forth on the journey when He was to bear His cross. Which of us can refuse to take His words—if He will give us the grace to do so—upon our lips? May this period of reunion be a period, solemn, yet infinitely joyful, of self-consecration, in the spirit of our Master Himself, for the sake of our own neighbours, who wait, perhaps more wistfully than we imagine, for our ministerial hands; for the sake of our country, which may yet be called, in the providence of God, to play her large part in the regeneration of the nations; and for the world, which 'He suffered to redeem.'

WILLIAM F. LOFTHOUSE.

HYMN :

JESUS, with Thy church abide ;
Be her Saviour, Lord, and Guide,
While on earth her faith is tried :
We beseech Thee, hear us.

May her voice be ever clear,
Warning of a judgement near,
Telling of a Saviour dear :
We beseech Thee, hear us.

May she one in doctrine be,
One in truth and charity,
Winning all to faith in Thee :
We beseech Thee, hear us.

May she guide the poor and blind,
Seek the lost until she find,
And the broken-hearted bind :
We beseech Thee, hear us.

May her lamp of truth be bright ;
Bid her bear aloft its light
Through the realms of heathen night :
We beseech Thee, hear us.

May she thus all glorious be,
Spotless, and from wrinkle free,
Pure and bright, and worthy Thee :
We beseech Thee, hear us.

IV

METHODISM AND THE WORLD

Those who knew James H. Saxton the best loved him the most. His passing is a great loss. No one can say what his wonderfully resourceful mind would have brought to this meeting. But his theme remains: Methodism and the World. Methodism means one hundred thousand churches and thirty-five millions of adherents. All these hosts of God, spread over the habitable globe, stand for a certain Christian experience: an awareness of God, of God in Christ, of Christ as Saviour and Lord. They bear witness that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. They know that He breaks the power of cancelled sin and sets the prisoner free. They have certain knowledge that men can come into right relations with God, man, and life; that surrender to Christ means a heart 'strangely warmed' and renewed; an influx of new life; man becoming, right away, more than himself, or, if you like, finding himself a new creation in Christ Jesus the Lord. Methodist experience ever means that old things have passed away and all things have become new. That Methodist experience is not exclusive: millions of other Christians share it. Something corresponding must be known by men of non-Christian religions. All that we affirm is that Methodism stands for a definite and exhilarating experience of the saving grace of God. That remains —and the world remains. The world without this experience, the millions of our fellows all over the planet, good, bad, and indifferent, but lacking this one thing, are therefore deprived of life's central

charm, and consequently of the social weal and general welfare attendant on Christian life.

The world without God in the Methodist sense, or in any other understanding of the term, is ever in sorry plight. The world, in our ordinary speech, means everything unchristian. Two thirds of the human race are not yet nominally Christian ; they are without God in any Christian sense. They have no idea of the power which streams into men as they consciously yield themselves to the love of God. They have no conception of the love which gives meaning to life and death and the vast beyond. That Jesus is yet unknown to two out of every three men on this planet is the most pathetic of all facts. In that one fact are all the shortcomings of Mohammedanism, all the stagnating conditions of Confucianism, all the agonies of atheistic Buddhism, pantheistic Hindooism, and all the drawbacks of rankest heathenism. Nor is this all. The third of the human race nominally won to Christ is far from being Christian. Sir Frederick Treves, in one of his books, said that one of the triumphs of Christianity is that it continues to live amid the corruptions of modern Jerusalem. If Jerusalem is coming down from heaven, we know only too well that it has not yet reached the earth. Not a solitary state on the planet claims to conduct its affairs according to the mind of Christ. Militarism is receiving notice to be gone, materialism as the ruling factor is discredited, individualism of the selfish sort is left without justification, but it is still true that all these unchristian forces remain. So much so that the Jerusalem Conference maintains that we have reached a time in world history when the conflict is not between religions, but whether, from this time on, spiritual or material forces are to rule the world. That, we are now told, is the question of all questions.

Happily the Christian forces of all creeds and lands

are coming together for united action. Methodists take their place in the van. Their burning ambition is to get their own experience of the grace of God across to as many of the world's millions as they can. They believe that, as far and as fast as men and women come into right relations to Jesus Christ the Lord, they will find solutions for all the ills and wrongs of the world. And they steadfastly believe that the world can be saved.

Alas that all do not share this faith! One great man holds that the world has passed through eight cycles, and that we are now nearing the end of the final lap. Another says that the world is a clock running down, and that it may stop any time.

Suppose that the world is a clock running down, then it must at some time have been wound up, and, if wound up once, why not again if need be? This is a world of law and order, and it is also a world of surprise and miracle. Bishop Butler taught us to remember that what we call miracle may be the operation of laws with which we are not familiar. Revolution has often broken in on evolution. New things have turned up, changing outlook, and setting men on new adventures. Surprising recoveries have again and again saved tragic situations. If in the past, why not to-morrow and in the days to come? The miracles of the past are exceeded by those of the present. What is electricity? What is wireless? What is aerial navigation? What is the carbonization of coal? And, in higher realms of action, what is American Prohibition? What is the League of Nations Union? What is the bringing of World Peace into the realm of practical politics? In the light of yesterday these are wonders of advance. There is no day without discovery in the laboratory. Every day and every hour the world's spiritual seers are leaning out in expectation. Thinking people stand on tiptoe of breathless anticipation. Unless democracies go stark

mad, on a world scale, and fall into a moral collapse that may bury us in the bottomless pit of oblivion, we seem to be on the threshold of one of the great ages of the world, if not of the greatest. Infinite resources are waiting to be staged. Apocalypses are knocking at the door. We are hardly over the border-line of the wonderland of the mind. Only a tiny proportion of the incredible millions of neurons that constitute the human brain are yet called into action. The millions sleep. They are as the idle in the market-place. They are not hired. They await the kiss of some prince to bring the sleeping beauty into consciousness, and fill all the world-castle with enchanted light and power. Edison says that we do not yet know a millionth part of anything—which is very bold. Kipling warns us against submission to the god of 'things as they are.' That god, he says, is an idol to be dethroned. Mystery, disease, epidemics, and worse realities, like evil habits, national hates, and every form of sin can be done away. These abominations are not inevitable. They remain because men have not risen in their might to clear them out. All reconciliation to the inevitable leaves out of view the creative forces always battling with the destructive; the mind of man as it is, as it may be; the idealism which allures; the faith which energizes and drives. It leaves out God, God in Christ, in the power of His Spirit. 'God is able to subdue all things unto Himself.' Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down. Put a cheerful courage on.

Browning sweetly sang:

> My own hope is a sun will pierce
> The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
> That after Last returns the First,
> Though a wide compass round be fetched.
> That which began best, can't end worst,
> Nor what God blessed once prove accursed.

John Ruskin said that the first thing in all

undertakings was to know what you wanted, and the next thing was to know how to get it. We know what we want—a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. All the kingdoms of business, pleasure, politics, education, and culture to become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ.

How are we to get it?

The answers are many. Methodism makes its reply. Convinced that it is possible, Methodism needs, for one thing, the world outlook, still to see that the world is its parish. Any resting on achievements will be fatal. We must go on to keep on. It is like bicycle-riding. Whenever aggressive leaders have been followed by unprogressive followers stagnation has become deterioration. After Martin Luther's death men said we cannot go on at this killing pace; we must take our breath—and they did. The lull gave the enemy a chance. Roman Catholicism leapt to the occasion, and recaptured strongholds from which she has not yet been repulsed. When, in our own land, George Fox laid down his arms and fell on sleep, Quakers called a halt—fell on quietism. And they immediately began to lose ground, to the irreparable loss of spiritual religion in this land. So throughout. Wherever men have failed to advance, the cause for which their fathers stood has right away lost ground. Methodism could furnish examples. With the advent of Union, therefore, there should come a renewed world vision of the fields white unto harvest. The great lands, awaking from the sleep of centuries, need the gospel of the grace of God. Unless those who know the power of God unto salvation present the knowledge of it to these far-flung lands they will never get it. God has entrusted it to us. Without us and our fellows He can do nothing. We are without option, we live under solemn obligation. We owe it to ourselves: we cannot retain the bloom of our own

Christian experience unless we share it. We owe it to those in need : they are reaching out for what we have. Material advance will overwhelm their spirits and leave them in the night of despair unless we take or send the light of life. Most of all we owe it to Jesus Christ the Lord : He waits to see of the travail of His soul through our missionary aggression.

With this race-wide mission, Methodism must take pains to know world conditions. The day for zeal without knowledge has long since passed. John Wesley was a keen student. He got to know all available facts about the people and the world he yearned to save. Each branch of Methodism has had its scholars, study circles, publishing houses, and these have made invaluable contributions to progress. Knowledge must now grow from more to more.

Concurrently Methodism needs an adequate recognition of its ample resources in men and money, and most of all in Jesus Christ the Lord. God waits to do far abundantly above all we ask or think.

Given these three conditions, the Methodism of tomorrow will nerve itself to deal with everything that stands in the way of its mission. It will brook no obstacles.

That means much. I happened to be in South Central Africa when the Great War broke out. The awful news reached the native. One anxious African asked, ' Is it true that England and Germany are going to war ? ' ' Yes,' I said. ' It's a thousand pities.' ' But England is Christian,' he went on to say, ' and Germany is Christian. Can Christians go to war ? ' And there the puzzled African stood. I hung my head. I now remind you that the war has staggered the minds of millions of men in Africa, India, China, and Japan. Missionaries have been baffled to explain the why and wherefore. Millions of people in these awaking lands have wondered whether it is, after all,

worth while embracing a religion under which men can plan to murder each other.

If Methodism is to carry its evangel to earth's remotest bounds, it must unite with all who love peace to make an end of war. It must make a clean breast of all complicity in everything that makes for war. It must never again bless any war flag. Methodist boys must not be encouraged to join the colours. Indeed, the day seems to have arrived for stopping all recruiting for fighting-men on land and sea and in the air.

Methodism will give its whole-hearted support to the League of Nations Union and to the World Alliance for promoting International Friendship through the Churches. Its pulpits and people will insist that, whatever might have been said for any war in history, the day has now come when every misunderstanding can, and must, be settled without the shedding of one drop of human blood.

As of war, so of other obstacles to Methodism. When the son of a Japanese gentleman came under the influence of a Christian missionary and seemed likely to turn from the Buddhist to the Christian faith, his father didn't argue with him ; he arranged that he should visit England and see the seamy side of London's life. That, he said, would stop conversion to Christianity. He came, and as arranged, saw our slums, our poverty, our unemployed clamouring for life's necessities. That checkmated missionary influence. Now, that knowledge of the unchristian conditions of Christian lands is spreading among people we passionately desire to win for Christ, we are being held up by what they know about us. And it seems the simplest duty of the Methodist people to take the beam out of their own eye. Or, to be exact : to make an end of the social, economic, and all other ills that stand in the way of evangelization at home and abroad.

H. J. Taylor.

HYMN :

SEE how great a flame aspires,
Kindled by a spark of grace !
Jesu's love the nations fires,
Sets the kingdoms on a blaze.
To bring fire on earth He came ;
Kindled in some hearts it is :
O that all might catch the flame,
All partake the glorious bliss !

When He first the work begun,
Small and feeble was His day :
Now the word doth swiftly run,
Now it wins its widening way ;
More and more it spreads and grows,
Ever mighty to prevail ;
Sin's strongholds it now o'erthrows,
Shakes the trembling gates of hell.

Sons of God, your Saviour praise !
He the door hath opened wide ;
He hath given the word of grace,
Jesu's word is glorified ;
Jesus, mighty to redeem,
He alone the work hath wrought ;
Worthy is the work of Him,
Him who spake a world from nought.

Saw ye not the cloud arise,
Little as a human hand ?
Now it spreads along the skies,
Hangs o'er all the thirsty land :
Lo ! the promise of a shower
Drops already from above ;
But the Lord will shortly pour
All the Spirit of His love !

BENEDICTION.

VIII

METHODISM AND WORLD EVANGELIZATION

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In recent years revolutionary changes have taken place in the conditions under which missionary work at home and abroad is carried on. A trustworthy and far-seeing observer of world movements has summed up these changed conditions in a phrase of searching significance, 'The Peril of Secular Civilization.' By this is meant an interpretation and manner of life that include only the natural order of things and assume that man is capable by his own efforts of redeeming himself and the social order. Natural science, it is suggested, will enable him to control the forces of nature and his own growth also. The social sciences will show him how to create a worthy social order. Art and Religion, in the sense of reverence for the mystery at the heart of things, will furnish ideal values for the elevation and enrichment of life. At a lower level, pleasure and material success are counted the chief ends of life. This view of life, both in its nobler and less worthy forms, is rapidly becoming the practical creed of large classes in every country. It provides a world philosophy common to East and West alike. At home it pervades the life of our cities and is swiftly leavening village life also. Abroad, the most serious rival of Christianity is not any of the ethnic or primitive religions, but the advancing tide of this self-same secular civilization. This peril raises questions of supreme interest to all who carry the Christian Evangel to the masses of men at home and abroad. Does secular civilization, however rich in resource, possess within itself energies capable of solving ultimate human problems? Can the spiritual values which are the finest fruits of Christian civilization be preserved if they are cut off from their roots in the Christian interpretation of the ultimate nature of reality? Can the race hope to possess and preserve efficient incentives to moral heroism and sacrificial service for others, if men lose faith in a religion the central mystery of which is the Cross? Finally, how can the Methodist Church present its distinctive message so as to challenge effectively the assumptions of this secular civilization?

HYMN :

YE servants of God, your Master proclaim,
And publish abroad His wonderful name ;
The name all-victorious of Jesus extol ;
His kingdom is glorious, and rules over all.

The waves of the sea have lift up their voice,
Sore troubled that we in Jesus rejoice ;
The floods they are roaring, but Jesus is here ;
While we are adoring, He always is near.

God ruleth on high, almighty to save ;
And still He is nigh, His presence we have ;
The great congregation His triumph shall sing,
Ascribing salvation to Jesus our King.

Salvation to God, who sits on the throne !
Let all cry aloud, and honour the Son :
Our Jesus's praises the angels proclaim,
Fall down on their faces, and worship the Lamb.

Then let us adore, and give Him His right,
All glory and power, all wisdom and might,
All honour and blessing, with angels above,
And thanks never-ceasing, and infinite love.

READING OF THE SCRIPTURES :

'The Lord's Compassion' – Matt. ix. 35–x. 1
'His Lament' – – Luke xix. 41, 42 ; xiii. 34
'His Vision' – – – John xii. 20–26
'His Redeemed Host' – Rev. vii. 9–10

PRAYER, WITH THE LORD'S PRAYER.

I

THE PERIL OF SECULAR CIVILIZATION—AT HOME

The first questions that occur to a critical observer who can take a well-measured survey of the progress of science are these : Are we any the better as human beings for the developments of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries ? Are we wiser, or happier, or purer minded ? Is the distinction between good and evil more pronounced than it was two hundred years ago ? Is pain less potent and more easily borne ? Are sorrow and anxiety diminished, or diluted, or overcome by means of all the discoveries and organization and enterprise of a hundred and fifty years ? We may also ask ourselves : has the spread of democracy added to the sum total of human welfare ? What good has come of all the toil of statesmen and legislators and philanthropists ? Has greater freedom borne good fruit ?

There can be no one answer to questions which cover the whole field of happiness and human endeavour. On the whole, my answer to these questions is in the affirmative. We are healthier animals than were our forbears of two centuries ago. Knowledge is more widely spread ; medical and surgical skill ease and prevent a certain amount of pain ; and democracy has brought in its train many forms of social and economic justice. It is easy to overestimate the advance made in modern times, and a statement on sorrow, anxiety, morality, may easily be too positive. Having no definite and calculable evidence on which

to proceed, we are apt to answer any question of greater or less happiness, or finer or more precise distinctions between good and evil, according to the effect upon our spirits of good or ill-health ; or according to the effect of the movement of current events upon our outlook or temperament.

For my own part, I should feel inclined to say that the great mass of the people have a keener sense of right and wrong now than at any time in our history ; that, on the whole, the economic and personal morality of the races which I know best is higher and more strictly obeyed in practice than at any previous time. Even if we are a more nervous race than we were two hundred years ago, and more sensitive to misfortune and mental misery, I incline to the view that, while the greater sorrows are no less than they were, the daily anxieties which marked the lives of our forefathers were more distressing than those which worry us.

It is mainly because of the rapidity of material progress and the apparent triumphs of Teuton, Gaul, and Anglo-Saxon that secular civilization of the European type is more and more admired by the rest of the world.

Because America and Britain and France and Germany have command of immense resources of material wealth, there has been a growing tendency throughout our time to believe that the science which they command is the mainspring of progress, that the strength of a people can be found in its budgets, and the number and expansion of its industries, its factories and its fleets. The tendency of the time has been to appeal to standards which are secular rather than spiritual, material rather than ideal, and even financial rather than moral.

In a hundred and fifty years we appear to have added almost indefinitely to knowledge : the biologist, who thinks in centuries or millenia ; the astronomer, who thinks with facility of millions of miles and of

five hundred thousand years; the electrician, who is conscious of, and can direct, immeasurable forces; the explorer in little things, who finds the infinitely little more amazing than the infinitely large—all these have been able to tell the world in the course of a century and a half that human knowledge and mastery are greater now than ever before in the history of the world.

The observer from outside Europe must feign confess that in demonstrable progress the chemist, the biologist, the mechanic, and the electrician have made good their claim. Is it any wonder that so many men and women with incompletely stored minds should therefore think of science as the rival, and even as the alternative, of religion?

Fifty years ago the world was terribly disturbed by the conflicts of science and religion. That kind of controversy is now out of date. There are very few of us at this Congress who were not stirred by the duels of Huxley and Gladstone two generations ago, yet in our own time we have seen the protagonists of scientific method and religious practice superseded in controversial skill by those who are more subtle, and, it may be, have a more intelligent view of natural laws in the spiritual world.

In these years, when scientists have tended to become more religious, and Christians to become more scientific, there has been one supreme tendency endangering the ultimate happiness of mankind, mainly because of its faith in that which can be seen, but is nevertheless inadequate. Physical power and wealth are well-nigh worshipped by the white peoples, and the Asiatic and African believe that they see in our mechanical discoveries, our engineering triumphs, and our electrical ingenuity the explanation of the relative strength of Europe and America, and the relative weakness of every backward race. And they will tend

more and more to copy us, even if they copy what is worst as well as what is best or second best.

Respect for power and strength is universal. There is no country in the world in which the millionaire is not regarded with envy. The strength of nations is still measured by the power and weight of the strong right arm. Wealth—all that it means, in buildings, machinery, mines, railways, ships, and comfort and luxury, is the aspiration of every race. The gravest danger the world has to face now is that this reverence for physical power may take the place of reverence for the spiritual and the divine, and that what are interpreted by the intellectual giants to be the laws of nature, instead of supplementing, may displace or ignore the laws of God. Yet science has its morality, for we have to pay the price for every sin against the elemental laws ; even if we cannot read the mysteries of Nature accurately, we know that we shall suffer if we treat her with contempt. It is no less true to say that moral and spiritual sin, and the attempt to shut our ears to the voice of God and our eyes to His wonderful works, involve us in penalties no less terrible than the price to be paid for every infringement of the laws of Nature.

The peril of modern civilization is that it teaches the young and the ignorant to admire those things in what we call ' progress ' which have given us victory over time and distance, and have increased with ever greater volume the harvest to be drawn from the resources of the earth. Railways and ships have transformed distant lands and peoples into near neighbours ; engineering and mechnical skill have multiplied our productive capacity a thousandfold. Can we wonder that the world cries constantly for more and more of it, and imagines that it grows better and stronger with every advance of physical science ? All this is so natural that we can scarcely be surprised when, in course of time, these admirers of knowledge become

heretics, and grow up in the belief that the Divine Creator and the human soul are figments of poetic or superstitious imagination.

. . . . . .

Unless we are prepared to state our case as Christians —claiming for the Christian religion that which no industry and no stores of wealth and no scientific triumphs can ever supply—the judgement of the world against Christian philosophy will go by default.

There is no conflict between true science and true religion. It is possible to extend human knowledge infinitely, and at the same time to maintain unbroken touch with the divine. Let us, then, say in conclusion, in the most emphatic terms, that secular power can never take the place of that sense of God without which we cannot know the true value of either men or things. The spiritual life lasts for ever : secular triumphs are more and more inadequate as they are more and more dedicated to the passing incidents of trivial fractions of time.

Men of science have been giving to us a better sense of the nature of things. They have been telling us how much can be got out of the world. Let us tell them how much of the divine can be brought into it. The master of mechanics has shown us how to contrive, to make, and almost to create. Let the men of religion show the world by their lives and through their churches that their power of organization is as potent as the power of any master of commerce or any political autocrat. And, finally, let us demonstrate, as well as assert, that the heart of man can and ought to be changed, and that this change can only be brought about through the power of Jesus Christ and the mercy of God.

WALTER RUNCIMAN.

II

THE PERIL OF SECULAR CIVILIZATION —ABROAD

By 'secular civilization' we mean the development of society on a basis that ignores God, and neglects the spiritual. No civilization has ever been wholly secular, as none has ever been wholly Christian. The only difference between one civilization and another in these matters is one of degree. To a greater or less extent, secularism has influenced all nations and races in all ages—there is nothing new in it. What is new in the present world-situation is the alarming growth of secularism: the tides have risen rapidly in the so-called Christian lands, and have swept with all the force of a tidal wave over the non-Christian peoples of the earth.

In a paper presented at the Jerusalem Conference last year, Dr. Rufus Jones gives a sketch of the changing conditions of life in Europe and America which have favoured the acceptance of the secular view. He specially emphasizes the influence of the humanism which had its rise in the fifteenth century, the Renaissance, which turned men's thoughts to subjects other than religion, and the Reformation, which struck a blow at the traditional authority of the visible Church. The growth of science, especially natural science, and the spread of the scientific method of interpreting things unseen as well as seen, the invention of machinery and the incoming of industrialism with its thousand problems—economic, social, and political—have been

among the factors leading men to imagine that they can do without God. In the Great War this godless materialism found its supreme expression, and struggled for the mastery of the whole human race.

The development of the means of communication —the locomotive, the steamship, and the aeroplane, the telegraph, the telephone, the wireless—have brought together the ends of the earth, so that no race, no people, can live unto itself. The ideas and ideals of each become the common possession of all. The worst elements of our Western civilization have spread abroad as well as the best, and, as we might expect while human nature is as it is, the worst have taken root more readily than the best. The secular view of life has found in non-Christian lands a congenial soil, and it has flourished.

When we say it has found a congenial soil we do not close our eyes to the spiritual values of the non-Christian systems and religions. We are, however, forced to admit that, owing to their lack of dynamic, these systems and religions, however good in theory, fail in practice. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' For the deepest needs of the human heart they are inadequate. Whenever the non-Christian religions, even at their best, prevail, we find among the masses polytheism and idolatry, with a practical outlook that is essentially materialistic. The spread of our Western civilization did not create the secular spirit in Africa and the East, but it has done much to confirm it by destroying the spiritual values and moral sanctions which in the past have given a measure of life to non-Christian peoples.

We Christian missionaries have gone forth into the whole world to proclaim Christ as the all-sufficient and only Saviour of mankind, and to teach the Christian religion as supreme and final. But, just as we judge other religions by their fruits, other peoples judge our

religion by its fruits. They cannot be expected to keep separate in thought Western religion and Western civilization. And what impression must the so-called Christian civilizations make on the non-Christian?

Christ teaches that 'God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth'; He said that His followers were to 'seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness'; but Christian Governments must seem to be little more than chambers of commerce, regarding the world merely as a market, and human beings as producers and consumers. Wealth is measured by square miles of territory and bank reserves. Vast armies and navies are maintained to keep in safety what has been acquired, and to secure still more. Even the 'Christian' nations go to war with one another, and bring all the resources of their civilization to inflict suffering and death. They summon millions of non-Christians from over the seas to help them to cripple and slay one another. And when they go abroad, backed with material force, in search of raw materials for their manufactures, they do not recommend Jesus Christ. Gold is discovered in Klondyke: the news flashes over a continent, and a hundred thousand men rush from lands which profess to believe in something 'more golden than gold.' Two hundred miles of railway must be opened in the Congo: it matters little that four thousand black men lose their lives in its construction. The worst elements of our industrial system are transferred to Japan and China: it makes little difference whether this be done by unscrupulous Europeans and Americans, or by the equally unscrupulous Orientals who imitate their methods—they have their origin in 'Christian lands.' Tens of thousands of men, women, and children are now toiling in the Far East under shameful conditions of labour, and in their case there is no protective law or public opinion to help.

We send abroad millions of copies of the Holy Scriptures, laboriously translated into foreign tongues, and some excellent Christian literature. But from Christian lands are also sent hundreds of tons of literature, some designed to destroy all religion among students, some fanning the spirit of hatred between classes, some foul in immoral suggestion. We exhibit films abroad which we dare not show at home because here there is a censorship, and reveal to millions of ignorant people, who have few if any moral restraints, the devilry that prevails in the underworld of the West.

A leader in the *Allahabad Independent*, referring to the work of missions, stated bitterly that the British were ' ready to prostitute the very religion they profess so that a few rich men may become more wealthy.' In reference to our mandate he wrote : ' In Palestine the crusaders will introduce to the Holy City, where the Prophet Christ died, their sacred institutions of the whisky-bottle, the gambling-hell, the bookmaker, sweated labour, and all the other blessings of civilization. Charlie Chaplin will smirk on posters in streets through which the Prophet Christ carried His cross. Jazz bands will scream and rattle, their din penetrating to spots where the voice of Christ was once heard. " Bookies " will tempt men to gamble within sight of the spot where certain persons drew lots for the clothing of the dead Teacher.'

This is the language of exaggeration, and is grossly unfair to the British, for there is another side of the picture : India owes an immeasurable debt to British administration and to Christian missions. The words standing alone are a travesty, but alas ! a travesty of truth.

We have only touched briefly, and that only on the surface by means of a few illustrations, on the peril of the secular element in Western civilization, which has enormously increased in recent years, and infected

the whole human race with its virus. No wonder the non-Christian peoples are perplexed, and hesitate to accept the commendation of Christianity by peoples called Christian.

There is another serious factor in the spread of secularism more damaging than all else in world evangelization. The Christian Church is herself permeated with the secular spirit. It is at the root of much sectarian strife—we make more of the visible scaffolding than of the invisible temple. Problems of organization and ritual absorb so much time and thought, and engender so much bitterness, that we cannot unite in seeking to save a lost world, and we not only gather into separate and wholly independent camps with no intercommunion, but destroy our own souls in fighting one another. Public education must be secular in most Christian lands, lest one denomination should steal a march upon another. The spirit of secularism even enters into the most sacred of our means of grace—the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The 'body' and 'blood' of our Lord must be materialized; and the Church is saying, 'Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.' The same spirit enters even into our theology. There are those who mechanically define things spiritual, and set out their dogmas like labelled, stoppered bottles on the shelf of a laboratory. On the other hand there are those in the Church who have no place for tradition, no regard for outside authority, and no deep convictions themselves, who seem to delight in destroying the faith of others. The witness of the Church to Christ, even from the lips of its leaders, is often very contradictory and perplexing.

Unfortunately, the mischief of secularism is not limited to the teaching and preaching of the Church.

It runs right through the living of multitudes of professing Christian people. It can be seen in their homes, their luxuries, their amusements, their standards of giving to God's work, their unwillingness to give time and thought to spiritual service, and in their general lack of interest in winning this world for Jesus Christ.

Sadhu Sundar Singh, who is never bitter, said, after a visit to England: 'I feel that, just as the sun is seldom to be seen on account of fogs and mists, so the Sun of Righteousness is almost always hidden by the fogs and mists of materialism.' It is true. The feet of the Christian Church are being crippled, its hands paralysed, its wings broken, by secularism, which is eating as a deadly disease into its vital forces.

The Methodists have by no means escaped. When we preach Christian perfection we must not be annoyed if it be said to us: 'Physician, heal thyself.' This is not a reason for giving up the preaching of holiness, but it is a reason for living in holiness. Methodist Union will not of necessity bring holiness, but it will strengthen us in spreading it when once we attain to it.

Christian missionaries realize that the greatest obstacle to the progress of the Kingdom of God on earth is not in the non-Christian religions, but in the secularism which has rapidly grown in degree and in extent in recent years, and has overshadowed the Church itself. The supreme need is for reality at the home base of missions. The world must see Jesus Christ in our teaching and in our lives if it is to be evangelized and christianized. The call of the day is for a Church not necessarily big, but pure, spiritual, faithful, which is the body of Christ, who is the Head. Such a Church and no other will lead at home and abroad in the van of those called to establish heaven on earth.

J. H. Ritson.

LET US PRAY :—

Almighty God, the Father of all mankind, who hath commanded us to make intercession for all men, hear us while we pray :

That we may be delivered from the shadow and peril of a life without hope and without God in the world, that our hearts and the hearts of all men may be inclined to Thee, and to Thy great love, that we may become indeed the children of God.

We beseech Thee to hear us, O God.

That it may please Thee to turn our hearts continually to our brother's need, that we may truly reverence our brother and so be delivered from the spirit of caste, and from all unjust and needless inequalities, and that the fair brotherhood of men, which Thy Son came to establish, may exist among us of a truth.

We beseech Thee to hear us, O God.

That it may please Thee to purge our common life from the love of luxury, from the pursuit of vanity and frivolity, from irreligion, from intemperance, and from vice ; and to multiply the number of brave, earnest, self-sacrificing followers of Christ.

We beseech Thee to hear us, O God.

That it may please Thee to purify and exalt the domestic life of the people, to deepen our sense of the worth and sacredness of home, so that the households of our land may be scenes of noble discipline and the nurseries of true religion.

We beseech Thee to hear us, O God.

That it may please Thee to regard with Thy favour the labour of our hands, so that men everywhere may be in their transactions upright and honourable, in their workmanship conscientious and thorough ; and that dishonesty, and avarice, and selfishness may speedily cease.

We beseech Thee to hear us, O God.

That it will please Thee to turn the thoughts of the nations from war and violence and to deepen men's love of peace and their trust in judgement and truth, and so put an end to international and industrial strife, that true fellowship may be established among men, in the Spirit of Jesus Christ Thy Son.

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

O Thou who art Love, and who seest all the suffering, injustice, and misery which reign in this world, have pity, we implore Thee, on the work of Thy hands ; look mercifully upon the poor, the oppressed, and all who are heavy laden with error, labour, or sorrow. Fill our hearts with deep compassion for those who suffer and hasten the coming of Thy kingdom of justice and truth : for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God who, by Thy Son Jesus Christ, hast commanded us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, make us faithful and obedient to do Thy holy will. Give us compassion for all who are living without Thee in the world. Send forth, we beseech Thee, labourers into Thy harvest. Protect and guide them wherever they go. Give them patience, love, and a right judgement in all things. Gather in Thine elect from all nations and hasten Thy Kingdom. Amen.

HYMN :

THY ceaseless, unexhausted love,
Unmerited and free,
Delights our evil to remove,
And help our misery.

Thou waitest to be gracious still ;
Thou dost with sinners bear,
That, saved, we may Thy goodness feel,
And all Thy grace declare.

Thy goodness and Thy truth to me,
To every soul, abound,
A vast, unfathomable sea,
Where all our thoughts are drowned.

Its streams the whole creation reach,
So plenteous is the store,
Enough for all, enough for each,
Enough for evermore.

Faithful, O Lord, Thy mercies are,
A rock that cannot move !
A thousand promises declare
Thy constancy of love.

Throughout the universe it reigns,
Unalterably sure ;
And while the truth of God remains,
The goodness must endure.

III

THE METHODIST CHURCH AS A CENTRE OF REDEEMING INFLUENCE—IN AWAKENING AND RECLAIMING THE SOUL

The only way I know to awaken and reclaim souls is to seek for them : to go where they are and insistently and lovingly proclaim ' Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' This discussion on evangelization rightly comes at the close of the consideration of the important subjects that have occupied your attention : not because evangelism is the least among the many activities of Methodism, but because it is the greatest of all and the climax of all.

It is impossible to think of the Methodism of the future without looking back at Methodist history. The first book I turned up in preparation for this meeting was *The New History of Methodism*, and my main interest was the chapter on ' The Time and the Conditions.' The deep impression made on my mind was—and it remains—how times change and conditions alter ! There has been change in the Church itself. As compared with the early Methodist Church, I miss in the life of the Church of to-day the sense of tremendous urgency that sent men out with a consuming passion to turn men to a pardoning God. A new emphasis in theology, the change in the eschatological outlook, the more humanitarian spirit of our age, have tended to blunt the edge and diminish the intensity of the evangelistic appeal.

It is in the world in which we have to work that we

mark the greatest change. There were sinners, gross and vulgar enough, in Wesley's day. But they knew they were sinners, and their one fear when awakened was that they were too bad to be saved. Our harder task in these days is to awaken men to a sense of need and reclaim them from their pride and complacency. It is almost an axiom of the kingdom of God that the publicans and harlots enter in before self-righteous, self-satisfied, and stiff-necked Pharisees.

Perhaps the situation can best be summed up by saying that we have to see our task in the present age against the background of 'a secular civilization.' Most of you are up against it every day.

We Must Realize How Grave is the Problem and How Great is the Task.

The gulf between the world and the Church is both deep and wide. It is not only that men have no use for the Church; the painful fact is that many of them have no use or time for religion. I have taken part in crusades that have been organized to urge men, not simply to come to church, but to take Christ's way of life. I could tell stories of men who in clubs and dining-halls asked for and sang the old hymns; of men who at works' gates asked for decision-cards; and of men who were won from lives of selfishness to lives of service. But I could tell also of men who asked not for 'Rock of Ages,' but for something vastly different; of men who, when offered a decision-card, said, 'I've no use for it'; of men who said, as one actually did say of a prayer offered asking for light and guidance, 'It is a pious utterance uttered to one who cannot answer because he isn't there.' I am no alarmist, but that is the situation as I see it. Only a Church desperately in earnest, and girded for a stiff task and a stern fight, is equal to so desperate a situation.

What of the approach to the individuals who make up this new and contradictory world? Little or no good will be done by mere denunciation. We are custodians of a gospel, and there is no 'good news' in lurid descriptions of the fate that awaits the frivolous. Men are usually driven to the devil and drawn to God. Many people would be more at home in hell than in heaven. The only way to send them to hell would be to put them down in heaven. Besides, the days are gone by when all human pleasures could be described as evil, and when we could forget that if man is a soul he has a body that needs to be fed and clothed and housed. I question whether Christians ever were kill-joys and spoil-sports. Certainly they ought not to be. The Christ we know and preach lived His life among men, and was as much at home at their feasts as their fasts, at their weddings as at their funerals. He fed the hungry and taught men to pray for daily bread. We, too, can approach men with broad sympathies, share what is pure in their sport and pleasures, and help them in their struggles for a fair share in the good things God has given richly for man's enjoyment, even while we insist that our spiritual message is supreme and that men ought to seek first the Kingdom.

But just there is one of our supreme dangers. Some years ago Mr. Edward Shillito wrote an article I have never been able to forget. Its title was 'Lowering the Pitch,' and in it he instanced the old precentor who first sets the pitch high, and afterwards lowers it when the people do not take up the tune. So, he says, the Church has been tempted to set the pitch lower because of lack of response, only to learn that there is no greater response. The standard of membership is lowered and then there is another decrease to be met. To lower the pitch is not to swell the chorus. And even if numbers were to be won on these terms, we have no

right to use them. Whatever else our new Church is, it must not be a compromising Church.

The Need for Plain Speaking.

Some in the motley crowd will only be awakened by a rude shaking and plain speaking. They will have to be told frankly that if they are not worrying about their sins they ought to be. The sense of sin, we are told, is often, 'and especially in adolescence and mental disease, something to be avoided if possible, and got over, like the measles, with the utmost celerity, instead of being paraded as admirable.' No one wants a morbid dwelling on sin—Scripture forbids that as much as psychologists—an artificial attempt to create the sense of it, or a parade of it. But there are times when an honest Church will have to look some folk straight in the eyes and tell them that they are sinners in the sight of God and men, and that their first duty is to go down on their knees and say 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' We need not be afraid of such tones and terms. There were times when the patient eyes of our Master flashed fire, and when His voice thundered 'Woe unto you.'

The Church and its Gospel of Redemption.

But the glory of the Church is in the gospel it has to preach. Here there is no change; 'the message of the Church is, and must always remain, the gospel of Jesus Christ. The gospel is the joyful message of redemption here and hereafter, the gift of God to sinful men in Jesus Christ.' That is the deliberate finding of the International Missionary Council held at Jerusalem last year. There are more men and women than we think who are fully awake and alive to their need of such a gospel. There are agonized cries for pardon and deliverance. If we have no Good News, we are discredited, and sinners are hopeless. No one else claims to have a Saviour for the

lost and outcast. In an age of remarkable discoveries nothing has happened to invalidate the exclusive claim: 'There is none other Name given under heaven whereby we must be saved,' there is no other Name, and no other hiding-place from guilt and shame, only Jesus. It may be, as General Booth used to say, that no man's arms are long enough to reach both the rich and the poor, the respectable and the outcasts; but some one's arms must be long enough and strong enough to gather in those who have strayed farthest from God. My ideal Church is the Church of the Shepherd-heart.

The Winsome Power of Sacrificial Lives.

There is one other way in which we may awaken and win men, and maybe it is the best way. 'God was in Christ,' says Paul, 'reconciling the world into Himself . . . and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.' That message is not always or best conveyed in words, but in Christ-like lives. Lifted up on a cross, our Lord draws men unto Himself. It is not by His peerless character or His matchless teaching, it is by His bleeding heart that He saves men. And it is not otherwise that we shall win men. We have no earthly or heavenly chance of awakening and reclaiming sinners if we are not fully awake and if we have not unreservedly yielded to Christ's claims. The crippling weakness of the Church is in the fact that so many of its members have yielded to the spirit of the age. The subtlety and strength of secularism are revealed in its victory in the lives of Christians. Far and away our greatest need is the need of men and women constrained by Christ's love and redeemed by His power to lives of utter unselfishness. I am not straining for effect or forcing an illustration when I say that each of the three uniting Churches has an outstanding illustration of men who are winning men

because they themselves have been saved from secularization to something finer. The best thing in *Lax of Poplar* is not the good stories we have enjoyed and told, but the Christ-like devotion of the man who, through all these years, has toiled in East London for the good of men. Not far from Poplar, in Whitechapel, Thomas Jackson has won the confidence of all because it is clear that he has never sought his own, but has given his all in love for others. United Methodism has no story set in type, but it has a record in heaven of a man who sacrified his chance of making wealth and living in ease to conduct a Bible class and lead men to a higher life. It is the glory of T. R. Blumer, not simply that he is a great preacher, but that men feel the strength of a life devoted to God and God's children.

That is what we need—the reinforcing of our preaching by the resistless logic of Christ-like lives. Nothing could be beyond achievement by a Church made up of such men.

I have missed my way unless I have made it clear that before us is a task that can only be accomplished if we let God have all there is of us. I can understand the temper of one who said: 'If you are going to attempt it you had better put the Book of Ecclesiastes under your arm.' But that is not the Book to take with us to our tremendous task. Let us take the Book which tells of a man who faced a situation in which the people were not asleep, but dead. When he looked on them he likened them to 'dry bones, very dry.' And the word of the Lord came to him, saying: 'Prophesy unto these dry bones.' And then: 'Prophesy unto the wind.' When he obeyed, the dry bones came together, the breath of God came upon them, and they stood up a living army.

FREDERICK BARRETT.

IV

THE METHODIST CHURCH AS A CENTRE OF REDEEMING INFLUENCE—IN CHRISTIANIZING THE SOCIAL ORDER

This subject is vitally related to the preceding one.[1] To awaken and reclaim the soul is to create the demand for a worthy social order. To get the slum out of the man in a world like this necessitates the next step—the getting of the man out of the slum. Awakened souls, for the sake of their normal unfolding, demand the removal of whatever environment hinders, and the establishment of conditions that facilitate, growth in grace. Biological science has made us familiar with the many delicate stages in human origins, when unfolding life might easily have taken wrong turns, and intended men may have developed into we know not what. Equally susceptible to strange happenings are newly reclaimed souls. The mark of the prize in Jesus Christ is perfectly clear, but the way thereto is bestrewn with wily dangers that even the most penetrating psychology can only dimly see. The extent to which soul growth is contingent on surroundings may not be apprised, but no one doubts but it is real and tremendous. Happily, conditions have substantially improved with the passing years ; for this we lift to God the voice of praise ; but the probability is that this reform is only a hint of what is yet to be. The winning of souls and the making of a Christian order of society needs to advance infinitely yet. Herbert Spencer is not the only great thinker who has insisted that man will never attain ideal manhood save in an ideal world.

[1] 'Awakening and Reclaiming the Soul.'

The vision of a coming Christian order of society has haunted the day-dreams of the generations—the golden day so long desired. About the certainty of this we do not falter. Professor Hirst, of the United Methodist Church, has shown that it is of the nature of the universe. At the heart of reality lies the Christian potentiality. Throughout the wide range of animate and inanimate nature it can be traced. Man in his heart of hearts is not born in sin or shapen in iniquity. He is originally good. God made him so—in His own image. An all-wise and ever-bountiful Creator must have intended to make a corresponding world. Only short-sighted folly could have launched the choicest work of creation on unbuoyant and inevitably wrecking oceans. Any worthy view of God demands the expectation that it is possible to get His will done, not only in the saving of the soul, but in the order of society in which the soul is to live and move and have its being.

Unfortunately, all have not seen this. Every generation has had its Flinders Petrie. Jeremiah has been the traditional high-priest of pessimists. Dr. Lofthouse, in a brilliant book, has rebuked that unscriptural notion. If the nature of the world, and all that therein is, did not preach hope of a perfect order, the seers and saints who wrote the Bible rang it forth with clarion tones. They hoped all things—a new earth as well as a new heaven ; a world in which righteousness would abound as the waves of the sea. ' He shall have dominion.' ' He shall reign.' ' He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.' ' Thy Kingdom come ; Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.' There can be no going back on such clear predictions.

The early Christians were so gloriously obsessed by the presence of the wonder-working Christ that they took refuge in the prospect of His immediate return. The world was no friend to grace, but He would soon re-appear and then things would happen. He would

do the necessary—overthrow the seats of the mighty and exalt them of low degree. No need to denounce the rottenness of the existing order; they could confidently wait. All would be well. When, to their distressed amazement, He did not return—not, at least, as they expected—they found their hands so full of evangelistic effort, and without the least power of changing any economic, social, or political condition, that they took no action. Democracy was not. Tyrants ruled from Rome. Disciples of Jesus could only grin and bear it.

They were helped by the remembrance that He said that He had gone up on high to prepare a place for them; that where He was, there they might be also. Amid an intolerable order of society, that sustained. The longer He delayed His coming, the fiercer persecutions raged, the more they set their affections on things above. For both these reasons—Christ's delayed return, and the heaven beyond—and hosts of other reasons, multitudes of Christians in every age have despised this present evil world, and, by their unconcern, left it to go to the dogs. Even the people called Methodists—we think, the salt of the salt of the earth—have in their turn been so gloriously given up to the supreme joy of saving souls that generations of them have socially and politically been unconcerned. For the first two generations of Methodists they were without any effective power. Corrupt boroughs, packed Parliaments, the rule of parson and squire, illiteracy, Calvinism, limited franchise, and the rest, naturally damped down any hope of influencing reform. The only worth-while thing to do in such a static state of society was to get on with the saving of souls, and find comfort in songs of the realms of the blest.

> We have no abiding city here,
> But seek a city out of sight.

Bunyan's immortal Pilgrim, at a later day, by some perversity of interpretation, only stressed the other-worldly view. That view has persisted ; controlled the thought and dominated the life of Methodists. Apart from outstanding voices crying in the wilderness, Methodism has been more on the side of the heaven above than a heaven on earth. Hymnology, past and present, is evidence of this. History, the things done and left undone, also testifies. Published sermons, from Wesley down to to-day, are further evidence.

But, by the unmeasured grace of God, the voices crying in the wilderness are now heard and heeded. Their heresy, as is usually the case, is our orthodoxy. We stoned them ; we idolize their followers. Collier of Manchester, whose memory is green, is evidence. Thomas Jackson of Whitechapel is evidence. These men are now praised in the gate. That for which they stand is commended, even officially. Even Conference can see what some men have seen clearly for generations.

A Methodist born and a Methodist bred is in this land more responsible than any other man for the changed attitude of the whole Church toward the christianization of the social order. We owe an eternal debt to the name of William Booth. His *Darkest England and The Way Out* ended the age of hesitation, and ushered in the age of deep concern. During the last fifty years, Methodists and all other alert Christians have become increasingly anxious to christianize society from top to bottom and side to side.

Time would fail to tell of things already done—Factory Acts and the whole round of humanitarian legislation and reform. We live in a new social order. Christianity has done exploits. Jesus has seen of the travail of His soul. We sing our hallelujahs.

But—but the end is not yet. We are, it is true, out on the road of the christianization of society, but it will be a long, long way to the goal.

The aspects and wide ranges of life to be yet permeated and brought under the actual control of Christ stare us in the face. What would you name first?

Are the houses and homes of our land christianized? Are palaces of abounding luxury at one end of the social scale, and poverty-stricken slums at the other, according to the mind of Christ? Would Jesus our Lord be willing to live in either? If somewhere they sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, is it that they praise the way in which they refused the pleasure of the Court of Egypt and heaven, and came to the rescue of the down and out? Methodism has yet many things to say to the strong and privileged. It must take its good news to the new housing areas; but what is it going to say to the old stately homes of England?

Leaven is to leaven throughout until the whole is leavened. As for the slums, Christianity would clear out the lot. After these nineteen hundred years, in town and city there are slums in which you cannot grow flowers but you are trying to grow children—living-rooms for human beings, half below the ground or up reeking stairs; rooms in which I would not keep my dog. Could any bishop bless such hovels? Or ought all Christians to swear at them? The overcrowding in such places is another tragic aspect. Whole families in a single room—living, washing, eating, sleeping. Then the rents. Ten shillings a week for one room. A married man, with wife and four children, earning forty-five shillings a week and paying eighteen of them for two rooms and a scullery. The owner of an eight-roomed house getting three pounds a week rent. How can wife or husband or the landlord grow a Christian soul?

Then in closest proximity to all this is the staggering menace of persistent unemployment. Is that a Christian order of society that has one part of its workers being worked to death and another section without any chance of work at all? Admit, as you must, that Will Crooks flashed the truth when he said, 'The world is full of willing people: one half of them willing to work, and the other half willing to let them.' There is nothing to choose between the shirker and the sweater. Both are abominations unto God and man. But you must be fair. All employers are not sweaters, nor are all the unemployed shirkers. The unemployed easily become the unemployable. The fact of being out of work is appalling. But the physical, mental, and moral consequences are much more so. No easy solution is within the knowledge of men. But there must be a Christian way. Christ's own parable of the idle in the market-place justifies out-of-work pay. So does every brotherly instinct, to say nothing of Christian precept. No man asks to be born into this world. When on this stage of action, or inaction, law forbids suicide. Then, surely, law ought to provide either work for wages or wages by which to live. But Christianity is not mainly ambulance work; it is the call to a considered social order in which faculties will come to fruition by use. God arranged that men should be made by making the world ideal. Work is an economic and a moral necessity.

Methodism is out to christianize whatever provides legitimate work. That means the curtailing and ultimate abolition of the liquor traffic. That involves stopping of all gambling and betting—both wasteful ways of using money. Every pound spent on drink instead of on clothes, furniture, or necessities means loss of employment. Any money squandered on betting or gambling instead of being spent in ordinary

ways helps the bookmaker to get rich and thwarts the man seeking work.

Unreasoning hoarding of money, on the other hand, instead of spending, cannot be Christian. Ambitions to save and invest and live on interest are for most people difficult of realization, but some day we shall wonder whether it is according to the mind of Christ, since it does not do the most for the unemployed and is not for the best interests of the community. The whole economic system under which we live may have to come under review, and perhaps under revision. We have before the public just now a painful case of company floating and moneymaking by a few to the undoing of many. That can't be Christian. We know that certain business 'rings,' by controlling prices, make rents and much else almost prohibitive. All of which is vitally related to the christianization of society.

And so on. Two other factors count. At the bottom of industrial unrest lies the deep conviction that labour is not yet receiving its full share of the profits. That needs to be cleared up, and on a national scale. More money in wages would mean more expenditure, and therefore more trade, and consequently more employment. A wider factor still is coming into light. Unemployment is an international economic problem. A lower standard of life in the East means that the things once made in the West can be more cheaply produced there. The mills of Japan and China and India, and even Africa, are putting Lancashire operatives out of work. It means that our standard of life may go down unless theirs goes up. Every educationalist, administrator, trader, or missionary who helps to lift the standard of life in Eastern lands is assisting race-wide prosperity.

'Utopia's a fine place,' sang Tom Hood, 'but how are we to get there?' I have ventured some suggestions.

There are many others. Some seem hopeless. They meander through devious ways without the certainty that they will lead anywhere. But almost any suggestion should be welcomed in the world's present plight.

'The secret of statesmanship,' said Gardiner, the historian, 'is power to recognize all the facts.' Methodism began in the earnest search of a distressed soul for light. John Wesley gave himself no rest in search of pardon, peace, and power. He studied the Bible, sought diligently. The witlings of the college called this little group of students 'Bible Moths,' and, because they studied so methodically, they were called Methodists. That is a clue. It is in the divine order. The measure in which the Methodism of to-day and to-morrow are going to assist the christianization of every realm of our national life depends, in the first place, on an intelligent knowledge of the facts. That means study, the taking of pains, the putting of interrelated facts in their just relations to the problem. Methodism needs a Copec to guide its christianizing efforts. If that is first, then this is second : a considered conviction that the christianization of the social order is part of our responsibility to the present age.

There is no question about John Wesley being a social reformer. His diary shows that. If we take the Old Testament prophets as our guides, they clearly lay the duty upon us. Dr. Ryder Smith shows this. God, by His very nature, demanded a social righteousness like His own. The Old Testament lays down administrative principles for making a new earth. Samuel E. Keeble, to whom we owe much in this relation, explains that, according to the Bible, the duty of prophesying social righteousness is laid upon us by God. The silence of dumb dogs is not permissible, nor is the prophesying of 'smooth things.' 'A

wonderful and a horrible thing has come to pass in the land ; the prophets prophesy falsely and the people love to have it so ; and what shall ye do in the end thereof ? '

Jesus Christ lays upon us the same obligation. He took up the obligation of the prophets. On the broad basis of God's righteousness He demanded a righteous society. He came that men might have life, social as well as individual. He came for peace on earth and goodwill among men. His compassions were for the cities as well as the souls of men. Capernaum, Bethsaida, and the rest were pitied and loved. He judged society and classes, Pharisees, Sadducees, rich and poor. His parables deal with classes of men and communities and nations. His Kingdom is to come and His will to be done on earth. Eucken, the great scholar, seems amply justified in asserting that historical research puts it beyond question that the new Kingdom Christ came to set up means a new visible order. ' Never in history,' he declares, ' has mankind been summoned to a greater revolution than here. The totality of existence is to be regenerated.' God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. However the text may be interpreted, the wonder of redeeming love must mean, on all who share it, the bounden duty of bringing everything on earth into harmony therewith.

A passionate sense of obligation must necessarily be translated into active and continuous service. That is third. The dire need says this. Any sense of brotherhood demands it. Christ took upon Himself the form of a servant. He spoke, as Mazzini insisted, not of rights only, but of duties, and said that they should be first among us who were the readiest servants of all. If I had the ear of young Methodists, I would say to one and all what a great American said : ' Ally

yourselves with some worthy and unpopular cause.' Take off your coats to the christianizing of the social order. Carry Christian principles into trades and employers councils, town councils, county councils, and into the Houses of Parliament. According to ability and opportunity go into all such means of getting Christ's will done.

When the ancients erected their 'Market Cross' in the centre of village and town, they surely meant that the spirit of that Cross of Christ should control buying and selling, work and play, administration and everything. The world will be christianized when we have out-dared all military heroes in our efforts to give the Lord Christ pre-eminence in every realm and relationship of life.

H. J. Taylor.

An act of consecration :

Let us rejoice in the Christian hope of a Kingdom of God upon earth :

The inspiration of seers and prophets who proclaim it from afar.

The radiant hope of the Church in its conflict with an evil world ; the Day-Star uprising upon the night of every darkened age ; the divine challenge to all human desires ; purging the heart, preparing the mind, and strengthening the will.

Let us recall the gladness with which Jesus announced and the disciples heard that the Kingdom of God is at hand :

A Kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

A Kingdom for which multitudes long greatly, believing that there are two dwelling-places : our earthly fatherland, and that other the City of God ; of which of the one we are the guests, of the other the builders.

Seeing that our hope for the world is not in any power that is of the world, nor in any system of human rule, nor in readjustment, education, or culture, but in the creative power of God, the redemptive energy of Jesus Christ, and of the incoming of the Holy Spirit into human lives, let us resolve :

To exercise ourselves in personal and vicarious penitence for the sins of the world,
To look for His appearing who shall put all enemies under His feet,
To submit our hearts and our lives afresh to the rule of Christ,
To take up the cross daily,
To disown self,
To refuse the ease of the irresponsible,
To consent heartily to it that we are not our own,
To find our perfect freedom in His service,
To desire that self-forgetting humility which was the secret of Christ Jesus, who humbled Himself so low, whom God exalted so high,
To look forward, and to press forward to entire conformity to the spirit of His dying.

The God of peace who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting

covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make us perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN :

GIVE me the faith which can remove
And sink the mountains to a plain ;
Give me the child-like praying love,
Which longs to build Thy house again ;
Thy love let it my heart o'erpower,
And all my simple soul devour.

I want an even strong desire,
I want a calmly fervent zeal,
To save poor souls out of the fire,
To snatch them from the verge of hell,
And turn them to a pardoning God,
And quench the brands in Jesu's blood.

I would the precious time redeem,
And longer live for this alone,
To spend, and to be spent, for them
Who have not yet my Saviour known ;
Fully on these my mission prove,
And only breathe, to breathe Thy love.

My talents, gifts, and graces, Lord,
Into Thy blessèd hands receive ;
And let me live to preach Thy word,
And let me to Thy glory live ;
My every sacred moment spend
In publishing the sinner's Friend.

Enlarge, inflame, and fill my heart
With boundless charity divine !
So shall I all my strength exert,
And love them with a zeal like Thine ;
And lead them to Thy open side,
The sheep for whom their Shepherd died.

BENEDICTION.

IX

METHODISM AND CHRISTIAN REUNION—THE ASPIRATIONS OF OUR FELLOW CHRISTIANS

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By reason of its origin, history, and traditions, Methodism has many and close relations with the Church of England. It has also, through a common heritage of evangelical experience and spiritual freedom and through kindred forms of Church government and orders of ministry, many affinities with the Free Churches of Great Britain. In company with each of these Communions of Christians, Methodism cherishes the earnest hope of closer fellowship, and ultimately of organic union. It will be the devout desire of a united British Methodism to be used by the great Head of the Church, in accord with His grace and guiding Hand, to bring about so blessed a consummation. Movements on the Mission Field towards intercommunion and corporate action, together with the issues of the Lausanne Conference are touching the causes of our separation with a new light in which our agreements and differences find significant re-valuation.

In the presence of every aspiration of our fellow Christians towards the ideal fellowship of the One Body of Christ, the Methodist people are pledged to retain the Catholic spirit and reverent charity of their founder who declared that ' the Methodists are the friends of all and the enemies of none.'

HYMN :

City of God, how broad and far
Outspread thy walls sublime !
The true thy chartered freemen are
Of every age and clime.

One holy Church, one army strong,
One steadfast high intent,
One working hand, one harvest-song,
One King omnipotent.

How purely hath thy speech come down
From man's primeval youth !
How grandly hath thine empire grown
Of freedom, love, and truth !

How gleam thy watchfires through the night
With never-fainting ray !
How rise thy towers, serene and bright,
To meet the dawning day !

In vain the surge's angry shock,
In vain the drifting sands ;
Unharmed upon the eternal Rock,
The eternal city stands.

READING OF THE SCRIPTURE :

'Unto Him be glory in the Church' – Eph. iii. 14–21

LET US PRAY :

We humbly beseech Thee, O Lord, to save Thy Church from arrogance and impatience, and from failure to recognize the work of Thy Holy Spirit wherever He may please to dwell.

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

We pray that we may have patience to understand others from whom we differ, but who bear Thy name and adore Thee as Saviour ; may we be ready to appreciate the truths for which they stand.

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

That Thy Church may preach the gospel to every creature, set forth the truth that makes men free, proclaim the forgiveness of sins to the penitent, seek out the wandering and reclaim the lost.

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

That Thy Church may serve Thee in joyfulness of spirit, that it may encourage the noble and inspire the brave ; that it may keep a heart of compassion for all mankind and defend the cause of the poor and the oppressed.

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

For life in Thy Kingdom continually renewed, for the brightening hope of more abundant life therein, and for the noble examples of all Thy servants who are one with us in the Communion of Saints :

We thank Thee, O Lord, and bless Thy Holy Name.

Look favourably upon Thy Church, O Good Shepherd, that, strengthened with power by Thy Spirit, we may know the love which passeth knowledge and be filled with all the fullness of God, now and for evermore. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

HYMN :

JESUS, we look to Thee,
Thy promised presence claim ;
Thou in the midst of us shalt be,
Assembled in Thy name.

Thy name salvation is,
Which here we come to prove ;
Thy name is life, and health, and peace,
And everlasting love.

Not in the name of pride
Or selfishness we meet ;
From nature's paths we turn aside,
And worldly thoughts forget.

We meet, the grace to take
Which Thou hast freely given ;
We meet on earth for Thy dear sake,
That we may meet in heaven.

Present we know Thou art,
But O Thyself reveal !
Now, Lord, let every bounding heart
The mighty comfort feel.

O may Thy quickening voice
The death of sin remove ;
And bid our inmost souls rejoice
In hope of perfect love !

I

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND REUNION

Let me express at the very start my appreciation and thanks for the invitation which you have extended to me to address you on this occasion. I value it, not only as a token of kindly regard, but as offering me an opportunity of expressing to you the thankfulness which I, in common with large numbers of churchmen, feel, for what you have accomplished. For in many respects this is an historic occasion. The healing of divisions, the closer association in one organic life of bodies of Christians, cannot be a matter of indifference to other Christian bodies not immediately associated with them. You have broken down a wall of partition, and are entering into new relationships full of hope and possibility. True, it is only the start, and I am sure that none of you imagine that all is accomplished and the work is done. It is indeed but just started. Such a movement as yours is a refutation that Protestantism is divisive in character, tending to separations, and ultimately to that individual self-assertion which is inimical to corporate life and corporate action. More than this: you are seeing the way towards a vaster and more extended unity in the future. For all this, I venture to offer you in my own name and that of others sincere congratulations, congratulations enhanced by the fact that not alone in England, but at this very time across the border, the same movement is apparent. But the Mother Church—and you will, I think, concede that title as you reflect on the history of English Nonconformity—

cannot be indifferent to the progress and welfare of her children. She may indeed have in the past felt anxiety and even distress at the separations, though, as we look back on the home life of her family, we cannot but be conscious that there were faults on both sides. It is a characteristic feature to-day that children imagine that they can teach their parents much, and that, instead of following, they ought to be followed. Well, you are illustrating that modern tendency, and we older folk in humble admiration will do our best to follow your example, in the confident assurance that, where understanding love exists, complete unity must sooner or later prevail. If I apprehend my task aright to-day, I am not asked to traverse grounds which I have already trodden on past occasions when you have been kind enough to allow me an opportunity of speaking on possibilities of Reunion. Nor am I here to offer solutions of our differences, or to propound the position of the Church of England in relation to these, though I note that some newspapers, with that perspicacity which may be defined as the 'wish that is father to the thought,' have credited me with that intention. I am here to partake in your rejoicing, to join in your prayers and thanksgivings, and, if I may be permitted to do so, to indicate some of those broad and eternal principles which alike for you and for us must prevail, if unity is to be achieved, and to express my unswerving belief that the Spirit which has guided you in these steps towards unity will still continue His promised presence till we all come to that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, that ripeness and perfectness of knowledge in Christ, which will leave no place for error in religion or separation in Christian experience.

I am glad also to be associated with representatives of other communions, not yet organically one with you or us, but one, I am sure, in Christ. They and

I are here to learn something of the will of God for us all, and to seek how that one Church *as it exists in God* may be made *visible*, so that the world may know that He has sent us for His work.

Let me remind you that the search for unity is, comparatively speaking, a recent thing. Within the lifetime of most of us we can recall how men were content simply to rest on past conditions and on the particular traditions of their religious life. Their faces, instead of being turned towards the future, were directed to those past experiences which had brought their particular Church into being. That attitude, thank God, is being largely changed. The pressure of circumstances ; the secularity of the modern world ; the expansive force of missionary enterprise ; and, above all, the hostile forces which the Christian Church as a whole confronts to-day—have combined to arouse the Christian conscience. For the compelling question which we have all to face in this matter of Reunion is '*whether the present separation is wrong even though a past separation was right*?' For I suppose it may be broadly stated as true that schisms (I use the term in a merely technical sense) are almost always if not always, the result of the rigidity of the official mind in face of the expansive force of a new inspiration, and this means that it could have been avoided had the right spirit at that time prevailed. In the face of such rigidity separation was almost inevitable, and probably, as things prevailed then, was right. But the continuance of such separation may be entirely wrong when the conditions of the present are different from those of the past. With a deep feeling of penitence, we all, if we are honest in our desire for union, must meticulously reflect on this question. And such reflection will inevitably reject all short cuts and all schemes which offer a semblance of restored unity but avoid those realities by which alone it can be achieved.

The *laissez faire* attitude of '*live and let live*' is entirely inadequate. The association of a more friendly character in common duties and social efforts is indeed helpful, but is no substitute for the sharing in its fullness of a common life. This is where *federalism* inevitably fails. Organic unity is the only real goal; a unity in which life is one, fundamentals the heritage of all; the mission of the Church ordered and directed with one accord, in various ways perchance, but in intimate and close association; and where a fellowship of life, of worship, and of love reveals to the world at large a visible unity at harmony in itself and welcoming every effort by every road which the Spirit of God may direct. *Believe me, that is the only kind of Reunion worth working for.* For it is the reflection of the divine unity in the Godhead. It is the only kind which is impressive on the world, and the only kind which fulfils the high-priestly prayer of our common Master that we may be one as He and His Father are. It is for this that you and I must pray and unfalteringly hope to achieve.

Give me leave to indicate one or two methods towards such a goal. I would venture to put in the foreground the absolute necessity of converting the rank and file to the view which I have adumbrated. It is only when there is a passionate conviction of truth, widely spread, seizing on the imagination of vast numbers of people, inspiring their action, and dominating their wills, that such can be accomplished. To-day, indeed, leaders of religious thought are far in advance of their followers. True, leadership implies this, but if the Shepherd, as the old gospel tells us, goes before his flock and they follow in his footsteps, it is obvious that he must not be out of sight or even too far ahead. His vision may embrace the far-distant horizon, but his feet must be close to the many following footsteps. It is ever the man with the vision who makes

the mass movement. But such must not be the visionary, living in a world unseen by those whom he would attract. He must bring his ideal down into the realities around him, so that the ideal may become real and the real ideal. Each of us in our individual communions who has caught a glimpse of the glorious possibilities of a renewed Church must essay with renewed energy the task of imparting our inspiration to the mass of our people. It is intensive work within each communion that ultimately will draw these several communions into complete and harmonious fellowship.

In the second place—and I say this with some hesitation in view of the occasion which brings us together—there must be something of the retracing of our steps. I incline to think that we have concentrated too much on what I may call the superstructure and too little on the foundation. The varieties of worship, the construction of organization, the forms of ministry, are, of course, vitally important, but none of these things can be rightly tackled until there is a complete agreement on the foundation on which they are the reared structure. As we reflect on the oneness of the Early Church, whether viewed in the writings of the New Testament or in the immediate history that follows, we can see that *that* fellowship, *that* harmony, *that* oneness arose primarily, not because of forms of worship or of ministry common to all, but upon a common experience of a common Lord and a common way of life. It was this which impressed the ancient world so that 'the Way' was synonymous with the Christian religion. The distractions, divisions, and disorders apparent in later centuries, the bitterness and even cruelties which have stained the pages of Christian history, were surely due in large measure to a forgetfulness of this great essential fact.

To-day I doubt not that your start in organic unity

is due to a fresh start in the common experience of spiritual life.

We in the Church of England have, as you must be sadly aware, acute divisions—divisions which must be healed within our body before we can expect to heal those which lie outside. But we are gradually perceiving that these are only to be overcome by a fellowship of unremitting and understanding study together of the real fundamental essentials of our common faith. Only last week in *The Times* newspaper occurred a report of the Committee of Churchmen of divers schools of thought appointed by the Archbishops, in which appeared these words :

> ' The Committee was again encouraged to believe that by its method of careful and frank discussion it is possible to discover greater agreement than the keenness of controversy leads many people to suppose is present in the Church of England.'

True, the recent attempt to harmonize our differences failed to obtain a national and legal recognition, a failure which I for one deplore, for I believe that had Christian people—not only within our own communion but outside it—realized the opportunity and the meaning which underlay the effort, their fears would have been seen to have been groundless, and the effort itself recognized as one essentially in accord with the very Spirit whose manifestations we are rejoicing over to-day. We have not lost heart, for, as the poet says : ' By each hindrance interposed we climb.'

In the last place, may I say a word on the use of principle. Your Congress has as its subject : ' Methodism and its Responsibilities ' ; and the immediate section before us is that of Reunion. The experience which has led you up to to-day cannot be exhausted in what you have achieved. It is a gift

carrying with it responsibility for an even wider use. Equipped with it, you can play a great part in the future movement towards the healing of the breaches in the Christian Church at large. But both you and I have got to recognize that when we appeal, as we are bound to do, to what we regard as *principles* we must never lose sight of what I may call *the relativity of principle.* There is only one principle of universal application. It is the principle of a first cause which is God. All other principles are more or less limited in their application. Some less so, some more so. It is the gifted man who can discriminate. So when either you or I appeal to principle, we must be quite sure that we are not exalting the principle we enunciate at the expense of some greater truth. For the less must give way to the greater in those things which touch the deepest aspirations of Christian men and the foundations of the Christian faith. There is a proverb not inapplicable here which says 'The good is often the enemy of the best.'

Time forbids me enlarging upon this, but I suggest it as one of those factors in our efforts which must be remembered and taken into account.

As I close, may I entreat your prayers between now and next summer on behalf of the Anglican Communion. At the next Lambeth Conference, then to be held, one of the most vitally important matters before us will be this very subject of Reunion. It will come in an acute form, and its presentation will touch some of the most cherished convictions held within our body. The result will vitally affect the relationships between the different communions concerned, not only abroad, but here in your relationship to us, and ours to you. More than that, it will affect the progress of missionary enterprise. It may set back for a century the growing course towards the fellowship we desire, or it may leap forward in all the vigour

of fresh youth. Believe me, your prayers will be more than valued.

So I close, as I began, with an appeal to you and to those who are associated with me as speakers this afternoon to turn away the eyes from past divisions to future possibilities. Believe me, I long for the day when you and I without let or hindrance can speak from each other's pulpits, kneel together at God's Board, and feel in all our ministry that we are fellow servants of the same Lord, with the same commission and the recognition of all men as such. For that day I yearn, for that day I pray, for that day I utter the ancient supplication of the whole Church :

Veni Creator Spiritus,
Spiritus Recreator.
Tu Deus, Tu Coelitus,
Tu Donum, Tu Donator.

GEORGE BRISTOL.

II

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND REUNION

SPEAKING for Presbyterianism, a substantial segment of the Church Catholic, and probably as international in its texture as any except the Roman, I am proud and glad to say that we Presbyterians are convinced that God wills unity, and also recognize thankfully an irresistible tide flowing to-day in that direction.

Twice lately I have been on a platform where my fellow speaker definitely argued for union of his Church with Presbyterians. Only a few nights ago, and near here, Mr. Ballard of this city advocated union of English Congregationalism and Presbyterianism. And some three months ago in Boston, U.S.A., I had the honour of speaking from Phillips Brooks's pulpit, at a Sunday evening service arranged by the rector of Trinity, where my fellow speaker, the Bishop of Massachusetts, outlined a scheme for reunion of Presbyterians and Anglicans in New England which he was submitting to the Councils of his Church. But, loving Anglicans and loving Congregationalists, I am not sure that I am not at least as much at home with you as with either : for it was John Wesley who said : 'When I am gone, the Methodists will be a regular Presbyterian Church' ; and so lately as 1912 Principal Workman wrote : 'Methodism is undoubtedly Presbyterian in the main lines of its organization, and this Presbyterian stamp was impressed upon it by Wesley himself.' All which may account for it that here in the south-west, where Methodism is strong, a Presbyterian finds it a little hard to breathe ; just as in

Scotland, where Presbyterianism is rampant, you may have to do a day's journey to find a Methodist.

Having mentioned Scotland, I must speak of that great act of Wednesday of last week in Edinburgh which will make October 2, 1929, a date to mark in history. I can see the grey Edinburgh streets, where the converging Assembly processions, of the Established and of the United Free Church, met, and swept as one body through the door of John Knox's Kirk, St. Giles' Cathedral, while the onlooking multitude sang spontaneously the rugged old metrical psalm :

> Behold how good a thing it is
> And how becoming well,
> Together such as brethren are
> In unity to dwell.

I, for one, believe that the Scottish separations of the last two centuries—the Secessions of the eighteenth and the Disruption of the nineteenth—had in them, past all human frailty, something that was of God, the claim that Christ must be Lord in His own house. But I believe they could come to say, like Israel of old : ' The Lord brought us out that He might bring us in.' For the instinct for freedom grew in the Church established as it revived : by common consent Bills were obtained from Parliament in 1921 and 1925 acknowledging (mark the word !—*not* ' conferring ') the right of the Church of Scotland to state her creed, to order her government, to enter into union with other Christian communions ; while endowments that had been vaguely described as ' national ' were now vested in herself. And now that she generously sought union, there came into being a real Church of Scotland. In that little land the population is less than two-thirds that of greater London, but this Church has a communicant membership of over a million and a quarter, well on for a thousand trained missionaries in the

foreign field, and a Christian liberality last year of between two and three million sterling. A great price had been paid, a great result has been reached, and a great object lesson has been given the world of a Church that is both Free Church and State Church. And it is good that a State, as such, should honour God. And this Union experience of Scottish Presbyterianism is a good omen for English Methodism.

Now, as to Unity, the main assertions of Presbyterianism are I think three :

(1) That the ultimate reality and authority in the Christian Church is the fellowship of believers, to whom the Lord Christ reveals His mind. We Presbyterians are all high churchmen, if you remember that a high doctrine of the Church is not just a high doctrine of the clergy. We have never underrated the ministry. We have no qualms as to our orders. As regards orders we can agree with a pungent remark of Bishop Headlam of Gloucester at Lausanne, 1927, to the effect that some folk need reminding that no orders existing on the planet are completely valid, because only a united Church could give such orders, and no such Church exists. But we rest the reality of the Church ultimately in the fellowship of believers, not in the ministry as such.

(2) We recognize every living fellowship of believers in Christ—be they Romans or Quakers, Plymouth Brethren or Salvation Army, as part of the Church Catholic of which we are part.

(3) We hold that while variety rather than uniformity is God's way, and while separation may at times be needful and right, for any section of the Church Catholic deliberately to unchurch any other is to be guilty of the sin of schism.

But in particular I wish to emphasize my conviction that a growing majority of Presbyterians are coming to

feel increasingly that what all sections of the Church to-day mainly need is, not to be over-absorbed in attempts toward outward Reunion, however excellent, but to get grace to recognize as existing the union God has already created. Surely He has created much these last nineteen centuries. If you can believe that our Lord's prayer for a unity in His followers that the world could see has gone absolutely unanswered, I cannot. If you say, 'But the world is not to-day recognizing such a unity,' that does not prove that such a unity is not there. Probably the reason the world does not see it is that the Church herself does not yet see it. She strains after unity where God has not placed it, she looks for it in doctrine, in polity, in sacraments: whereas He has put it in passionate, penitent devotion to, and adoration of, the one Lord—passionate, penitent obedience to His Kingdom. In that Romanist and Quaker, Methodist, Baptist, and Anglican are one now, if only they will realize it.

Let me give you a vivid and relevant example. It has been my hap to study, as closely as one could who had not been there, all records and reports of Lausanne, 1927, that I might report on it to the Quadrennial meetings of the World Presbyterian Alliance, held in Boston, U.S.A., last June. I find that deep regret was expressed in several quarters that it was deemed impossible to attempt a joint Communion Service at Lausanne. I for one am profoundly thankful it was not attempted. You had there every variety of sacramental doctrine, from extremest Right to extremest Left, from the frankest Transubstantiationist to the Quaker, whose only sacrament is that all life is sacramental. There would have been utter unreality, an outward doing the same thing with terrifying inward divergences. But real unity was gloriously reached in the great Service of Penitence held in the Cathedral on Sunday afternoon. There the whole assembly bowed

in shame and humiliation for the broken and weakened estate of Christ's Church to-day, each section taking to itself its own special share of blame. Together they heard the great penitential words of Scripture, and voiced great prayers of penitence, and sang great humbling hymns of the Church, and in that experience they knew themselves really one—genuinely, blessedly, savingly. Can we not together repeat that experience of theirs both far and near, so convincing first ourselves and then the world, that He who came at Bethlehem, He who is in our midst even now, is indeed the Very Sent of God?

IVOR J. ROBERTON.

HYMN :

CHRIST, from whom all blessings flow,
Perfecting the saints below,
Hear us, who Thy nature share,
Who Thy mystic body are.

Join us, in one spirit join,
Let us still receive of Thine ;
Still for more on Thee we call,
Thou who fillest all in all.

Closer knit to Thee, our Head ;
Nourish us, O Christ, and feed ;
Let us daily growth receive,
More and more in Jesus live.

Jesus, we Thy members are,
Cherish us with kindest care,
Of Thy flesh and of Thy bone,
Love, for ever love Thine own.

Move, and actuate, and guide :
Divers gifts to each divide ;
Placed according to Thy will,
Let us all our work fulfil ;

Never from our office move,
Needful to each other prove ;
Use the grace on each bestowed,
Tempered by the art of God.

Love, like death, hath all destroyed,
Rendered all distinctions void ;
Names, and sects, and parties fall :
Thou, O Christ, art all in all.

III

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES AND REUNION

In considering the problem of Reunion from a Congregationalist standpoint, I am reminded of a well-known mathematical puzzle. It is the question : What will happen if an irresistible force is applied to an immovable object ?

There is an apparently irresistible movement towards Reunion in our time, and Congregationalists are not untouched by it. The more forward-looking of us want Reunion with all our hearts. Personally, I should welcome, not federation, but organic reunion. We shall never truly be one in spirit till we are one body.

But whenever we Congregationalists contemplate Reunion, we come up against an apparently immovable obstacle. It is the Catholic theory of the Church. I use the name, ' Catholic ' in the conventional sense it has come to have in history, without prejudice to the claim of Protestants and Free Churchmen to be truly Catholic.

Why is the Catholic theory of the Church so great an obstacle to us ? It is because we are Protestants, and stand on the Reformation. We are not only Protestants but, along with the Baptists and the Quakers, we belong to the more radical section of Protestantism, which tries to carry out to its logical conclusion the affirmation of the Reformers that all believers are kings and priests before God. Perhaps in some things we are not so radical as the Baptists, or still more the Quakers. But we are radical all the same.

What is the Congregational theory of the Church? It begins with the idea of the Church as a fellowship of those who, speaking in the Holy Ghost, call Jesus Lord. The Church is not a mere voluntary association. It is the creation of the Holy Spirit, which is the bond of Christian unity.

The Church of which I have been speaking is the Universal Church, the fellowship of all believers. But it manifests itself in local Churches, each of which is controlled by one and the same Spirit.

The one and only condition of membership in such a Church is the confession of Christ as Lord. Of the sincerity of this confession the members of the Church assembled in the power of the Spirit are the judges.

What is the Congregational theory of the ministry? God calls men by an inward calling of the Spirit to preach the gospel. When a local Church assembled in the power of the Spirit ratifies the call, and accepts a man as its minister, that makes him truly a minister in the eyes of Congregationalists.

He will be solemnly set apart with prayer by his brother ministers, showing the assent and consent of the whole Church to his ordination. But this ordination simply recognizes an existing fact. It puts it in order : that is all.

What is the Congregational theory of the Sacraments? Congregational Churches observe the two Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as means of grace. We look upon them as special and peculiarly valuable forms of the gospel.

In Baptism the gospel of forgiveness and new life is preached prophetically to a child, its parents, and the assembled Church.

In the Lord's Supper the promises of the gospel are sealed and confirmed to believers by the tokens of the Lord's sacrifice in the broken bread and the outpoured wine.

We take our theory seriously. Though members of Congregational Churches are usually baptized and commonly partake of the Lord's Supper, neither of these things is strictly necessary to membership, but only the confession of Christ as Lord. We show our real belief in the doctrine that all believers are kings and priests before God, in that we admit laymen in case of need to do what is usually done by ministers. Any member of a Congregational Church in such a case may preside at a Church meeting, and may preach the gospel, and may administer the Sacraments. These things are actually done: we continually turn our theory into practice.

To sum up, the Congregational theory of the Church is *inspirational* rather than *institutional*. It is opposed to the Catholic theory in four points:

(1) The Catholic theory stands on creeds much more highly developed than the simple confession of Christ as Lord, and requires confession to take the form of subscription to or repetition of them. These creeds, which come down from the early Christian centuries, are held to be still binding on the Church.

(2) Still more important is it that the Catholic theory teaches that the promises of the gospel are only *implemented* through the Sacraments, to the reception of which participation in grace is attached.

(3) The Sacraments only contain and impart grace if they are rightly administered. While in case of need a layman can administer baptism, only a duly ordained minister can administer the Communion of the Lord's Supper so that it is a valid Sacrament.

(4) Finally, valid ordination depends on an unbroken historical succession in which, as a grace from God, the power to administer a valid Sacrament is conveyed through the laying on of hands.

This rigid Catholic theory is the great obstacle to Reunion, so far as Congregationalists are concerned.

The difficulty is not about organization. That is secondary. The difficulty is *theological*. It concerns the *meaning* of the organization.

Our objection to Catholicism is not that of our fathers. We do not say that the Congregational polity is the polity of the New Testament, and that no other polity is valid in the Christian Church. We know that the New Testament represents no one single Church polity. We recognize also that developments had to take place. Development is necessary if the demands of new ages are to be met. We ourselves are becoming much more highly organized. We have a Union of Congregational Churches, ever becoming more powerful. We even have Moderators, who are Congregational Diocesan Bishops.

But we believe that developments can go wrong, and we maintain that the development of the Church into Catholicism was a development untrue to the spirit of the gospel. We hold that the Church went wrong, not only in the Middle Ages, but in the first six centuries also. We believe that the Reformation was necessary and right, and that its principles should be logically carried out.

I would not say that the Church went wrong in formulating creeds. But we think it went wrong in *imposing* them, and we think it still worse to impose them to-day under modern conditions, when they cannot be said without reservations. We want liberty and a minimum of credal affirmation. No doubt to confess that Jesus is Lord is to affirm a creed ; but many modern Christians can make that affirmation from the heart who yet have difficulty in reciting the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, to say nothing of the Athanasian Creed.

But the real crux for us in the matter of Reunion lies in the theory of the ministry and the Sacraments. Catholic Christians want us to recognize at least in

practice a theory in which we cordially disbelieve. We cannot do it without falsifying our whole position.

I see no difficulty in this matter of the ministry and the Sacraments as regards reunion with any of the Free Churches. I think at bottom they all believe as we do ; though some may be slower to draw the logical conclusions of the belief, and slower still to turn them into practice.

Neither do I see any difficulty in this same matter as regards reunion with a very large part of the Church of England which is liberal and evangelical. At bottom I believe the Liberal Evangelicals in the Church of England think much as we do.

The real question in all our negotiations with the Church of England is whether the rigid Catholic theory is to dominate the situation, even for those who do not believe in it. It seems so often to dominate the evangelical element in the Anglican Church, so that its voice is not heard.

In these negotiations we never get very far before we come up against the rigid Catholic theory which unchurches us and declares invalid our ministry and Sacraments. We feel this iron gauntlet beneath the silken glove of friendship.

I began by referring to the mathematical problem : What will happen if an irresistible force is applied to an immovable object ? The problem, as we know, contains a contradiction in terms. If the force is irresistible, the object cannot be immovable ; if the object is immovable, the force is not irresistible.

The question for us Congregationalists who believe in Reunion comes to this : Is the Catholic theory of the Church really as immovable as it appears to be ? I hope not, and I look to Christian scholarship especially, such as that in Dr. Streeter's recent book, *The Primitive Church*, gradually to dissolve the obstacle.

Or, on the other hand, is the force towards Reunion, so manifest in our times, really irresistible? I hope it is, and that it will issue in further unions, such as that which has recently taken place in Scottish Presbyterianism and that which is soon to follow in English Methodism. I hope that it will ultimately issue in a Reunion of all Christians in this country into one body.

R. S. Franks.

IV

THE BAPTIST CHURCHES AND REUNION

I AM glad to be here and to join in your celebrations. No Christian can witness any movement towards effective unity without rejoicing. To-day the Kingdom of God looms large in all our thoughts, and whatever makes in the direction of that Kingdom claims our allegiance and goodwill.

You are doing to-day what we Baptists did in 1885. That year saw the amalgamation of the General Baptists and the Particular Baptists. The difference had been mainly one of theology, but in a larger outlook the two bodies were able to unite.

In speaking of this Congress to a brilliant young Wesleyan minister recently, I happened to recall this Baptist event of 1885. Whereupon he immediately replied : 'Yes, and if they could unite there's hope for anybody.' Well, in the years they have united, and in the light of experience we are justified in the conviction that the whole company of Methodists throughout the world will in due time be fused into one splendid, effective Methodist Church.

What will be the attitude of Baptists to such a united body? I need hardly say that it will be an attitude of hearty goodwill, expressing itself in readiness to co-operate for the purposes of the Kingdom. The Baptists are behind none in thanking God for the power and witness of the Methodist Church. We have always regarded the Methodist emphasis as a vigorous reiteration of our own.

Generally we Baptists are regarded as a somewhat

peculiar people. At recognition meetings we are chaffed in a good-humoured sort of way about our devotion to water. But I need hardly say, in this assembly, that our existence is not due to zeal for a particular form or rite. It was zeal for certain great principles felt to be vital to living religion that called us into being and that explains our continuance till to-day. It is our devotion to those principles that makes us a real part of the Church of Christ. We have never had any doubt that we are a real part of the Church of Christ ; and our very principles have all along the line enabled us to recognize fully our fellow Christians. Amongst the first to preach the doctrine of toleration, we have been able to cultivate the catholic mind and to rejoice in all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

Our mode and manner of baptism bears witness to our fundamental principle, and that is the reason why we are so slow to abandon it. Let me say here in parenthesis that our devotion to our form of baptism to-day, amid all the talk of unity, is not the outcome of either obtuseness or stubbornness. The best modern apologies for our custom have come from the most scholarly and catholic minds amongst us. In the past twenty-five years, I should say, there has been an unmistakable stiffening. Our position is stronger because it is less negative and more positive, not so much a protest against something that is felt to be wrong as a positive contribution to personal religion. Increasingly our form of baptism is being regarded as an asset to our Church life.

Our position is that vital religion is the outcome of God's operation of grace, definitely and deliberately accepted by the individual. Each for himself must come to the point where he utters a definite ' Yea ' to the offer of salvation in Jesus Christ. That is, salvation is by faith, and faith is the determined and directed

outgoing of the human personality. I do not suggest for a moment that we alone in Christendom hold this view. Far from it ! But with us it is so prominent as to dominate. Everything that characterizes Baptists can be brought into logical relation with this idea.

In accordance with it, we baptize only believers—i.e. those who have faith for themselves. Our baptism is a profession of faith. Our formula is—Repentance toward God and Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is also our condition of membership, although with that there is, of course, a certain minimum requirement of moral attainment.

It follows that we reject all idea of regeneration by water. Baptism is entirely secondary to faith. Here we have suffered a great deal through our name. I read a statement recently that Baptists make baptism essential to salvation. Yet precisely the opposite is the fact. By us baptism is a witness to a work which has already taken place in the soul, and it has no virtue with us unless that work of God has been done. A man says not, ' I must be baptized to become a child of God,' but, ' I am a child of God by God's operation and my acceptance, and I wish in baptism to express that fact to myself and to the Church.'

We feel it is a great thing to have a solemn moment in the individual experience when that expression is made.

Now, all this, you will see at once, rests on the conviction of the reality of conversion, and I think I can say that historically we have given conversion its place as the solid foundation of personal religion and the basis of the Christian Church. We have demanded that a man should be born again. And in this day, when the tendency of thought is to emphasize experience as the firm rock of religion, we find ourselves not out of date, but standing with an emphasis which is right in the line of modern theological thinking.

Our clinging to a particular form of baptism may seem to some an anachronism, but our emphasis on a real personal experience of God as vital to men and to the Church is surely not an unwelcome or discordant note even in this modern world.

With the emphasis on conversion has gone, naturally, a respect for the Scriptures and an insistence on preaching. Always we have tried to reach the masses. Gifford and others in this city preached to the miners—yea, in the very Kingswood district—in the stormy days of Charles II. Carey was the pioneer of modern missions. The theory has been : men can be converted by the power of the gospel, to that end the gospel must be preached, and the preacher must, as Bunyan put it, ' carry an awakening word.'

Concerning the mode of baptism, I will only say that it is felt to be valuable for two reasons. First, because it symbolizes the complete submission of the personality and union with Christ, and, secondly, because of its close connexion with our Lord's death. Our text is : ' Buried with Him in baptism and risen with Him to newness of life. . . .' In the Church it has certainly stressed the fact that the Christian life is one of obedience, though it has sometimes tended to obscure the equally important fact that the life is by enduement of the Spirit.

Now, what is the drift of all this ! Well, I did not think I could talk much about Methodism, for I am not sufficiently acquainted with the detail of your Church life. But I try now to look at the big thing in you. I find this same emphasis on conversion, on the necessity of a personal relationship with God, on faith and obedience, on preaching and the proclamation of the saving word.

What are our aspirations of unity ? I hardly know. We have a spirit of goodwill to all men of goodwill, we recognize our fellow Christians as fellow Christians,

we are earnest in our desire for the Kingdom—broadly speaking, our men are willing to co-operate. But we are slow to abandon our distinctive emphasis lest the cause of vital religion should suffer. And we rejoice that in other communions there is a similar outlook, though expressed in a somewhat different way. Our weight must of necessity be thrown on the evangelical and not on the sacerdotal side, and by our principles we are, and must remain, democratic.

You say in your pamphlet that you are looking forward. Whether the day will ever come when this great Methodist body will join in corporate union with the Baptists we can not say. But if ever negotiations to that end begin, the starting-point of the discussion will not be something in the circumference, but the centre itself. We shall be one in our emphasis on the value of saving faith, and the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ.

ARTHUR DAKIN.

HYMN :

THE Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord :
She is His new creation
By water and the word ;
From heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy bride ;
With His own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.

Elect from every nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation
One Lord, one faith, one birth,
One holy name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses,
With every grace endued.

Though with a scornful wonder
Men see her sore oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed ;
Yet saints their watch are keeping,
Their cry goes up, How long ?
And soon the night of weeping
Shall be the morn of song.

Yet she on earth hath union
With God the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy !
Lord, give us grace that we,
Like them, the meek and lowly,
On high may dwell with Thee.

PRAYER FOR UNITY :

Almighty God, in whom is calmness, peace, and concord, heal Thou the divisions which separate Thy children from one another, and enable them to keep the unity of spirit in the bond of peace. While there are diversities of knowledge and of faith, and we cannot all be of the same mind, may we be made one in brotherly

love, and in devotion to Thy holy will. Deliver us from all blindness and prejudice, from all clamour and evil speaking, that by the charity of our temper and thought and life, we may show forth the power and beauty of the religion we profess, to the glory of Thy holy name ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CORPORATE ACT OF CONFESSION AND WORSHIP.

THE APOSTLE'S CREED :

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth :

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord ; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary ; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried ; He descended into hell ; the third day He rose again from the dead ; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty ; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost ; the holy Catholic Church ; the communion of saints ; the forgiveness of sins ; the resurrection of the body ; and the life everlasting. Amen.

TE DEUM LAUDAMUS.

BENEDICTION.

X

THE MESSAGE OF METHODISM IN SONG

And can it be, that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

Methodism was born and cradled in a joyous outburst of song. The hymns of Charles Wesley enshrine the genius of Methodism. The Evangelical Revival breathes and throbs through them. The Methodists have ever been a singing people. Like the Lollards, and the followers of Luther, the early Methodists sang the gospel message to their neighbours and friends. The hymns of the Methodists are the best interpretation of the doctrines, experience, and responsibilities of Methodism. To the souls of men longing for personal salvation, they point the way and tell the joy of finding. In spiritual depth and tenderness, the contribution they make to the enrichment and discipline of the Christian life is unique in the literature of devotion.

THE MESSAGE OF METHODISM IN SONG

Mr. E. S. Lamplough, who presided at the closing session of the Congress, began his address by reminding his audience that one of the great formative forces which expanded the influence of the Evangelical Revival was the power of song. History confirmed the view of the man who said, ' Let me write a nation's songs and I care not who makes its laws.' In the early centuries dogmas like Arianism were spread chiefly by songs and ballads, and through the singing of the Lollards Wycliffe prepared the way for the Reformation, the leaders of which also used psalmody as the chief propaganda. Humanly speaking, the hymns of the early Methodists were one of the mighty forces of the Evangelical Revival. In later days the singing of Sankey had had a greater influence than the preaching of Moody—mighty as many of them remembered that preaching to have been. In every sphere of life music was a mighty power. How patriotism had been stirred by the singing of ' Rule Britannia,' ' Hearts of Oak,' and the National Anthem, and how the singing of ' Tipperary ' had helped the soldiers on their marches, and ' Keep the Home Fires Burning ' had helped those who stayed at home ! The secret of the power of music was that it was the language of emotion. It was just because music could create and express and intensify emotion that it claimed a place in the service of the Sanctuary. Of course music was not an end in itself, but it produced an atmosphere in which the preacher could awaken feelings by means of which he could reach the intellect and bend the will. Music must never, therefore, have the chief place in their services :

it must be subservient to the supreme end which was the salvation of human souls and the glorifying of God. He wished to say three things—first, that the organist and choir were wholly out of place in the Church if they were merely performers desiring the praise of men ; secondly, he would say that the congregation could worship God in silence during a voluntary or an anthem if those were regarded as part of the devotions of the congregation ; thirdly, in their singing, let the congregations observe John Wesley's rules : (1) Sing all, (2) Sing lustily, (3) Sing modestly, (4) Sing in tune, and (5) Sing spiritually.

The rest of the session was in the hands of the Rev. F. Luke Wiseman, who based his lecture upon John Wesley's famous *Hymns with Tunes Annext.* It cannot be reported. Those who have heard Mr. Wiseman will know that to be true. Mr. Wiseman was at his best, and the great audience followed him for an hour and a half—and then wanted more. He talked of the sources of the early Methodist music, of John Wesley's extraordinary ' flair ' for finding the right music for the great hymns and the great ' moments ' of spiritual experience. He sang the melodies and made his audience do so—melodies which set the feet beating and dancing, and which, in soft minor keys, brought a hush and a pregnant stillness. Through it all there ran the theme of ' a sinking to great depths and a rising to great heights.' It was a great and fitting climax to a Congress which has sought to find again the secret source of the power of Methodism.

AFTERWORD

The Congress must be a beginning, or else a failure ; but a beginning of what ? Of new life, lived for Christ in a world order more intricate and bewildering than our fathers faced, but yet made rich in opportunity for us by a fresh realization of the presence and sufficiency of God.

Such new life may come to the birth and die. It needs nurture. Dim visions and half-formed desires must pass into strength of purpose and achievement.

Every thoughtful reader of these pages will realize how overwhelming are the issues raised by the Congress. We are, therefore, driven to our knees. We urge all who feel concern for the Kingdom of God to join in constant intercession for the blessing of God on the issues of the Congress—that the end of the " Congress " may become the beginning of the " Crusade."

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